



SHE  
WALKS  
THE  
RED  
BRICKS

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨







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*Charisma* © Will Kim





*SHE WALKS THE RED BRICKS*

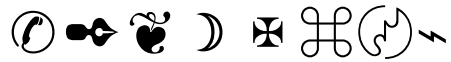


A Gothic Neo Tale

Based Upon:

MA Legislature MGL c. 272





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Anonymous / 2023  
A' E' H' Liz' A' Beth'  
Whom thou'st estan aqui?  
Nobody

'She Walks the Red Bricks'  
*Surviving domestic assaults, a woman hunts.*

Library Decimal System

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Dear:

Drew Barrymore, Representative Joe Kennedy III,  
Representative Ayanna Pressley, Representative Alexandria Ocasio  
Cortez, Representative Ilhan Omar, Representative Cori Bush,  
Representative Rashid Tlaib, Representative Dan Crenshaw,  
Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene, Representative Marie  
Newman, President Joe Biden, First Lady/Person/ Woman Dr. Jill  
Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris, Attorney General Rachel  
Levine, Representative Lauren Bobert, Vera Papisova, Andrea  
Blanch, Anna Wintour, J.K. Rowling, Stephen King, Margaret  
Atwood, Governor Maura Healey, Mayor Michelle Wu, Mayor Kim  
Driscoll, Representative Marty Walsh, Representative Elizabeth  
Warren, Representative Bernie Sanders, President Hilary Clinton,  
President Barack Obama, First Lady/Person/Woman Michelle  
Obama, Representative Zooey Zephyr

How do we prevent the oncoming battle hindered through the  
horizon?

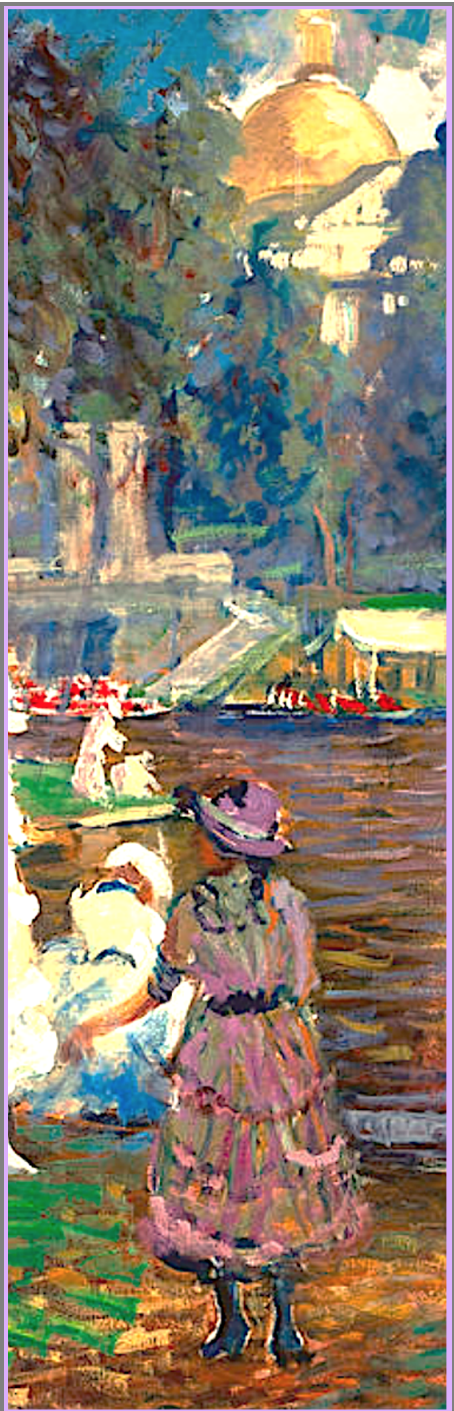
SOS,

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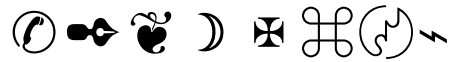




SHE WALKS

THE RED

BRICKS



If any adult dresses a person under eighteen years in white at a wedding, behold the Færie God Parent Wrath.

Yes, fists shall be thrown.

Free & rescue the twelve-year-old Missourian abused into marriage or face the guillotine, period!

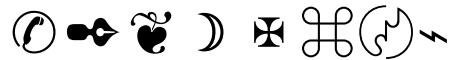


WHOEVER STEALS A PERSON AND SELLS  
[HER/HIM/THEM]  
AND ANYONE FOUND IN POSSESSION OF  
[HER/HIM/THEM] SHALL BE PUT TO DEATH.

EXODUS 21:16



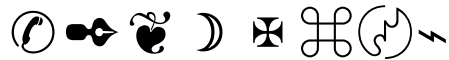
# PREFACE



*Demeter, the Goddess of Harvest ruled over Mount Olympus. The day her daughter, Persephone, disappeared; Demeter sought for her missing daughter. Nine days she searched the lands and the seas. Without Persephone, the Goddess of Spring, ice froze the gardens: lifeless.*

*Fearing humanity vanishing due to famine, Zeus sent his brother Hermes to the underworld. He discovered Persephone held captive by Hades. The day Hades abducted Persephone; she wandered the gardens. He trapped her with the blossoms of narcissus & pomegranate.*

*As he stole her away in his chariot, the rape occurred on the descent to hell. Demeter charged the pits of hell with her wrath. As she flung into the*



arms of Persephone; Hades advised she must reign over hell for half the year, but shall live above for the remaining half of the year.

They both fled. Once Persephone returned above, the crops began to grow. Descending to Hell, however; the Earth froze, hence the creation of Winter. While she glowed of sparkling eternity above Hades, people feared her wrath and the sentence of thy flames.

Persephone fancied a Gorgon named, Medusa, whom with the wink of an eye petrified her adversaries into stone. Jealous of Medusa's athletic endeavors and her power, Poseidon stalked her underneath the waves of the Mediterranean.

One night, Medusa waited for Athena at the crest of her aquatic palace. Poseidon rose from the water. When Medusa denied his sexual advances, he raped her. As Athena descended, she witnessed the attack. She helped Medusa fight off the serpent as he slithered into the ocean.

As Medusa cried in her arms, Athena suggested a higher power: bestowing snakes in place of Medusa's hair. Seeking protection and revenge, Medusa enriched the powers from Athena.

Unaware of an attraction, Perseus protected Medusa in the shadows, fearing his greeting as a death sentence. Poseidon waged a war against Medusa. As she battled against him, Perseus swooped down from Olympus and slashed his sword at Poseidon's gills.

The serpent dodged the blade as the weapon decapitated the head of Medusa Gorgon. A hush silenced the battle just in time for Perseus to hold her head high; destroying Poseidon and his army.

Seeking forgiveness, Perseus sought: Demeter, Athena, & Persephone. Together, they healed Medusa's wounds through their power of the four





*elements The five protected Mount Olympus from further danger.  
Thundering clouds and Lightning bolts crashed from the heavens.*





# I

THE WOMAN FLED INTO THE DESERT  
TO A PLACE PREPARED FOR HER BY GOD,  
WHERE SHE MIGHT BE TAKEN CARE OF FOR 1,260 DAYS.



AND THERE WAS WAR IN HEAVEN.  
MICHAEL AND THE ANGELS FOUGHT AGAINST THE  
DRAGON,  
AND THE DRAGON AND THE ANGELS FOUGHT BACK.

BUT THEY WERE NOT STRONG ENOUGH,  
AND THEY LOST THEIR PLACE IN HEAVEN.

THE GREAT DRAGON WAS HURLED DOWN-  
THAT ANCIENT SERPENT CALLED THE DEVIL,  
OR SATAN, WHO LEADS THE WHOLE WORLD ASTRAY.  
HE WAS HURLED TO THE EARTH,  
AND HIS ANGELS WITH HIM.

THE REVELATION TO JOHN 12:6-9



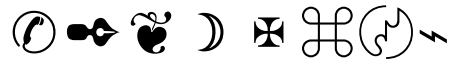
Through the enchanted forest, a gust of wind whooshes the air.  
Bark splinters a hair line snap! As the sun bursts and splices  
creamsicle light from the horizon, the morning birds fear for a chirp.

Thick branches intertwine the morning sky as barbed wire  
spirals a thicket over a terrorized fence. Fog rises from the emerald  
moss and dances a twirling evaporation.

Her bare feet inscribe prints with every sinking step she stakes.  
Before her Godmother Briar passed away during senior year of high  
school, she named the young woman: Rose.

She wandered a sleep walk through the charming, yet haunted  
terrain. Primary stitching of sunshine, cobalt, and crimson sway her  
flowing nightgown. The fabric vanished the oncoming thorns from  
scratching a bloody pluck across her legs and torso.

Her mellow strut leaned towards the bursting oak barks.  
Leaning closer, almost a kiss, she opened her mouth and let the  
carbon dioxide fill the plants; reviving asphyxiation into life.



Beyond the hallowed paths grounded among the fallen leaves and wet grass, a Maned Wolf pranced alongside the familiar person. Fluffy apricot fur protects the body of the fox hybrid.

Rose glanced at the canine with a soft smirk. Her hand graced the skull of the animal. With a moist snout, the maned wolf sniffed the wrinkles of her palm and cuddled a closed eye grin within her soft grasp.

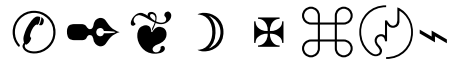
Beds of crisp daisies, bundles of lavender, & thorn roses weaved trails; bearing the wide crest of the twinkling forest. Looking at Rose with concern, as she wandered forward in her subconscious without aim; The animal galloped to the edge of trees. Kneeling to the ground, the maned wolf waited for Rose's arrival.

Her stare gilded her body further and hovered the sacred ground. The canine guard frolicked from the crescent clearing among the firm barks swaying on the leaf tops. The jagged and steep Bluffs cried for the sailors waving over the rushing salt water. Adolescent pondering of the future fizzed up from the crashing waves.

Emerging from the illuminated darkness, Rose followed her gaze further toward the sunlight. While she took each step with grace, the maned wolf ran forward.

Approaching the Widow's Peak with caution & ease, the canine peered a snout over the jagged cliff as the waves rolled and rushed below. A clear dive dwells with the amphibians & hidden sirens.

Waging a tail, the animal signaled Rose. Rose floated on air as she gathered closer to the grassy ledge. A pastel sapphire blended



with the erupting blush of the circulating atmosphere. Galaxies faded in view.

A new day arrived on Mother Planet Earth.

Her admiration wrinkled with alienation. Rose broadened her chest with a full deep breath, as she closed her eyes. She spread her arms as wings. Abandoning reality & succumbing to her dissociation, Rose exhaled her lungs.

She set her body free.

Cascading from land and diving to the sea, the maned wolf whimpered before jumping after Rose.

Silver oxygen bubbles exploded beneath the swaying aquamarine. Her hands spliced into the depths. Rose glided a parabola under the sea. Sun beams glistened around her body. Halcyon scales reflected an apparition as sharp diamonds.

Rose spun her body with a soft back stroke. Her eyes examined the rippling mirror dividing the submerged and the surface. She smiled at the Maned wolf swimming with her.

Plopping the head every so often, the paws paddled afloat.

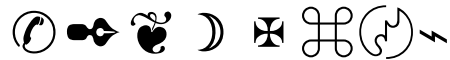
Rose arched her back, flipping her body over. Swimming deeper into the cold water, Rose kicked a glide toward the air. Goosebumps braced her skin through the temperature shift.

As the daylight brightened her face, Rose shut her eyes before crashing through the glimmering aquatic.

Liquid droplets scattered faster than shards.

SPLASH!





Her tight latex swim cap emerged from the chlorine. Her skull dashed the water, as a shark greets new territory. Locals & tourists enjoy their excursions across the Cape. In the athletic pool of Hartfield University, located in Norfolk County, dusk swept the land.

Rose circulated her arms with powerful throws. Her flexed shoulder blades drove her forward. Pitching workouts on the diamond improved her stamina; yet required further stretching and physical therapy.

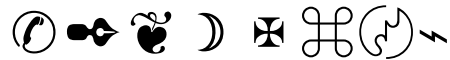
Her mouth gasped for air before sinking, as her arms guided her hands to pierce the controlled water. Contemplating her vision, a neon fuchsia octagon warned for the end of the concrete structure.

Closing in on the shallows, Rose tumbled a flip. Her feet pressed the submerged wall. Rose rocketed her body toward the depths. Placing her head forward, while swinging her arms above and around, she focused on her trail.

A few holds from oxygen sailed her to the board. Water gushed onto the floor as she pushed her body out of the water. She faced the clock and estimated her time. Water poured from her cap as her hair flowed behind her shoulders.

Shrieking blows echoed from a whistle.

Teammates from random sports lingered about the changing space. Steam rose from those washing away the chlorine. Anxiety pacing their blood streams for the oncoming evening, jolts coughed before slipping on the puddles.



Standing before the wide vanity, Rose brushed her hair with a soft tug away from the knots. Whisking her fingers through the follicles, she mounded and rose her hair into a bun. Gracing an elastic from the circumference of her wrist, her fingers secured the controlled mess above her skull.

*Efficient.? Shall do...*

Guiding herself away from the sinks, Rose tip-toed around the puddles; avoiding & bracing away from a brutal slip-trip. Her reflection captured the picturesque mirror. Rose stretched her body along a steel mounted, wooden bench. Sweat pants rolled the waist band at her hips. A faded tank top flopped her strong shoulders.

Rose placed both legs onto the bench as an elevated split. Muscles warmed among her groin. Lifting her arm above her head, she rotated her striking fingers to her toes.

*Slow & steady.*

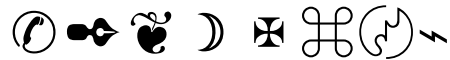
She found herself in the University Library that evening.

Contrasting Ugg Boots positioned her feet: Lilac & Xanthos. Gentle detergent buffs & lustrous spray paint rid the years of winter salt stains.

*Boots not to wear during and in the snow!? Asinine.*

Hidden amongst the bound Classics, Rose rested her elbows on an empty shelf. A spiral notepad, gel pen, and faux leather strapped bag: spiraled the tight yet lengthy space.

She read from a fresh, though worn, Penguin Classic.



His eyes stared on the front cover. Without the *Fallen Angel's* single teardrop, his defined muscles arched over his knees. His posture flexed an oddity controlled by mammal instincts.

His flesh bared naked. Shadows lingered toxic romance hidden among his features. Above his hair, the cover dogeared to a pulsing vein. Nicolai Abilgaard's, *The Wounded Philoctetes*, yearned for a scrumptious bite.

Rose indulged through the harnessed & frightful pages of *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley: a genre pioneer. Her eyes zoomed over the printed lines. Ink smudged her pink palm from the erasable pen.

She found the desired quote hidden in the context.

Rose cited with a whisper, "Contains [not a] trace of the 'skull-headed lady' that Marry Shelley claims was the central idea for Polidori's [scary] story attempt in 1816."

Soaring through the shelved & stacked spines, a paper plane scraped over her shoulders and crashed. Rose finished the note and opened the folded message:

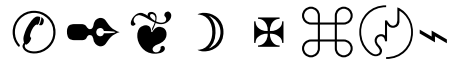
*SUPPER TIME!?*

Rose glanced down the aisle.

Leaning into the walkway, Brooke Stone, winked a greeting. Brooke financed for a silver gold ring in the near future: with or without a spouse. Glasses peered on the tip of her nasal passage; gazing through the collection.

Rose nodded her head. *Perfect timing!*

She finalized her notes, closed the paperback, and placed the spine in the empty, yet proper spot. Rose placed the notepad into her



bag and swung the essential accessory over her back & chest. Filing out of the aisled, she hip hugged her friend.

On the Quad, students sprinted across the grass. They smacked a volleyball over a tight webbed, yet wobbling net. Bursting stars and lamp lights shone upon the game.

Rose & Brooke sauntered along the cracked & sturdy path. They wandered their attention to the communal clatter of laughter, bickering, & yelling. Bystanders held thermoses: *spiked, of course.*

Jeanie Monroe stood strong among the teams. She advised her next serve, “hit it to Carrie, she’ll blow it!”

Somebody cackled a sarcastic, ‘LOL’.

The volley ball flew over the net.

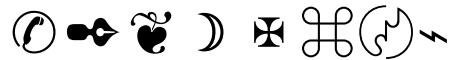
Jeanie jumped a sucker punch, striking the ball with her fist. Her chest plunged across the muddy grass. Stains smeared their jersey. The opposing team missed the ball as it repelled the ground.

Cheers bellowed from Rose & Brooke. Jeanie poked her head up from the ground. She howled in response, “LET’S GOOOO!!!”

Rose & Brooke chuckled as Jeanie rushed away from the net, thanked her teammates, shook the opponents hands, and snagged her gym bag from the sideline.

“Peace!” Jeanie raised a V by her middle & index fingers.

The trio strolled along the cobbled walkways. Their night seemed peaceful with a buzz of commotion; typical for a Thursday night. Jeanie dug through the avalanche of her duffel. She revealed a dense & ribbed mason jar; containing rolled joints of fresh Marijuana.



“Look what I scored!” Jeanie spoke.

Brooke responded, “Gnarly.”

They settled by the river running from the Waterfall. Biology majors maintain the water by pouring dish & laundry detergent into the stream. Clean air filters the rolling bubbles.

Jeanie unclasped the jar and passed the joints around. A shared lighter flickered a flame in the night. They listened to the peaceful friction of the water clashing on the cobblestones. Jeanie fished out a bottle of Dawn soap and squeezed the liquid into the stream.

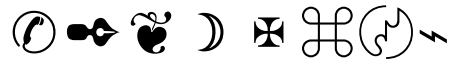
Clen bubbles fizz along the water’s journey.

Brooke passed the joint to Rose and turns to Jeanie. Their mouths collide, as Jeanie inhales the minty smoke from Rose. Brooke stepped forward as their bodies joined a triarchy.

Huddled among the nutritious options offered by the cafeteria, a wooden paddle glided into the flaming oven. As the chef swerved the instrument under the crunchy dough, they rescued the food from the burning flames.

Veggies scattered the special while placed on the cutting board. A rolling knife crunches and splits the dough into triangular pieces. Parmesan grates onto the sizzling mozzarella with dashes of red and black crushed pepper.

Mouths gaped: Brooke, Jeanie, & Rose swallowed drool as they ogled from the opposite side of the glass barrier. As the chef slid the pie under the red lamps, the friends scored their slices and thanked the chef.



Strutting a swaying balance with trays upon their palms, the trio glided a swerving stance through the passing of students lingering for their dinner. They found a round table nestled in a silver crimson brick corner, perpendicular by mirrors.

Brooke, Jeanie, & Rose ate in peace; wiping the grease from their faces. Bowls of: black raspberries, strawberries, celery, & carrots scattered centered the table. Sipping sparkling water & Gatorade, here and there; they mellowed with the dispensed crowd.

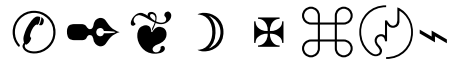
When the founders built & established Hartfield University by 1879, the foundations erected tunnels connecting the further buildings on campus. The goal persisted in the protection of medical equipment and patients from inclement weather.

Students utter lore about the University guiding the radical students through the tunnels; as a conditioned & hypnotic experiment for the individual's conformity to authoritative regimes.

For now: dust, echoes, leaking water, & shadows haunt the underground labyrinth.

Her flashlight glimmered as Rose investigated beneath the crept staircases of the University. She entered by descending the Morrison Hall staircase onto the ground floor. Rose detected herself through the held swinging door corridor; arched from the swivel stairs bridging the ballet studio, further the renewed entrance of King Hall.

Startled by the shrieking commotion on the grand porch steps above, Rose glimpsed through the foggy slit windows. She came to the door with a rectangular glass window meshed of wire.



Rose entered the tunnel and spoke into her tape recorder: “In History classes, professors claim to their students about the Fall of the Third Reich. Reports claim Evan Braun administered the cyanide pills to Adolf Hitler. News reports claimed the dictators suicide in a bunker.”

Rose cleared her throat, “Where are the coroner photos of the bodies? Emmet Till’s body appeared on every newspaper because his parent sought justice against Jim Crow laws.”

She halted in place as the flashlight shuttered.

“This hypothesis questions the suicide of Braun & Hitler as a propaganda spew in America.”

Curiosity drew Rose further through the maze.

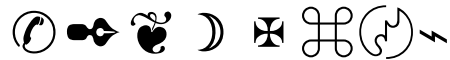
“When the Russians closed in on Auschwitz Birkenau in Poland, Dr. Mengele escaped to Brazil through the Odessa Network. He hid in the jungles. This theory ponders Eva and Dolf following along and reproducing.”

Ruby haze irradiated an empty doorframe. Rose attended her footing as she climbed the three steps through the portal. She stumbled into a barren office space. Yellow caution tape draped from the ceilings and walls. Translucent plastic wraps covered the furniture.

Obtuse windows surveyed the vacant quad.

Trembling from the sound of somebody approaching behind her, Rose found the blatant Exit sign over a far door. She jogged toward it. Her shoes squeaked on the checkered tiles as she ran down the main entrance stairs and through the front doors.





Her body burst through the doors and jumped from the granite ledge. Rose endured the night sky enclosed by the tall buildings. A chill shocked her spine and held back a nervous wail.

About an hour later, Rose brushed her teeth & changed into clean underwear, an oversized collar cut tee, & leg warmers. Appreciative & lucky to live in a single room, Rose knelt beside her bed. Rosary beads grasped between her warm palms.

Closing her eyes and crossing her body, she prayed.

“Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the lord my soul to keep. If I shall die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take.”

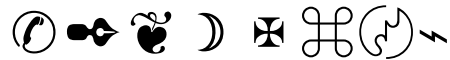
Standing from her prayer, Rose reached her arm into the closet and pressed a night light. She swallowed melatonin with water from her thermos. Turning off the overhead light, Rose climbed into bed, unplugged the rainbow holiday lights; veining the wall.

She studied the split cracks streaming over the ceiling. A pillow wedged a cuddle from between her chest, down to her legs. As Rose counted the sheep jumping her clouds, her body dozed to a slumber.

As her subconscious healed from eternal death, her lobes pulsed with breathtaking images. Rose woke in her bed, standing on a floral field. Buzzing bees pollinated the blossoms through the hills.

Floating in the air, a dandelion tickled her nose. With the back of her hand, Rose wiped her wet nostril. Admiring the landscape engulfing her, Rose threw the blankets off her body.

The bare & soft soles of her feet tread the flowing emerald grass. As Rose mounted her ground, the maned wolf appeared



through the mist of a low floating cloud. The mammal capered toward her with delight.

As Rose greets the canine, she regarded a single teardrop drying in the fur. The fox of a wolf kneeled down and rolled around the flowered terrain. She bowed before the canine. Rose rubbed the belly sending the mammal into a howling smile; licking her cheek.

“Aaaah!” She wept.

Rolling on the hind legs, the Maned Wolf pranced forward. Turning the neck, the creature nodded for Rose to follow along. Her feet adhered to the wolf’s path.

In the fantasy of proximity, a wooden kitchen table with iron steeled chairs attained the field. A cloth sofa, sealed of plastic, dared for a relaxed seating.

The fox conducted Rose to a cobbled stone ascension. She held her head high as the solar orb brightened her face. Rose brushed the flowing hair away from her view.

Descending to the herbal landing, the canine frolicked upon maroon, aquamarine, and dark grape. As Rose forward the line, her confidant dissolved into the breaking horizon.

She sauntered forward until-

HOOOOOOOOOOOONNNNNNNNNNNCCC!

Rose awoke a snap into Reality. She slept walked through the near dawn. Her vision flickered into focus. She held her hands, blocking the high beams.

The driver climbed out of the vehicle. Concern muddled his trembling voice. “Are you fine!?” He enquired.



Rose stretched her neck and turned toward the cracked sidewalk.

“I live over-“

She pointed her index finger and stepped off the road.

“You are lucky to be alive.” Dr. Grace Collier noted during the session. The Doctor sat across from Rose in firm cloth arm chairs. Nothing but air distanced the two people.

Natural light glistened through the industrial windows; scrolled with venetian blinds. Rose avoided disassociation by studying the poster behind Dr. Collier’s desk: a medical map of the human brain.

*How many brain cells did I kill in my lobes from weed?*

Rose detailed her near fatal sleepwalk, “It felt so normal, like I was going out for exercise. The honking did not scare me. It sounded like an alarm clock.

“Did you drink anything before sleep? Soda? Alcohol?” Dr. Collier asked while noting her legal pad.

“Water.” Rose replied.

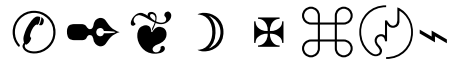
“It’s been a while since your last encounter. You mentioned when you were about sixteen.”

“Last night was very strange. My body lacked gravity.”

Grace leaned forward with her wise suggestions, befuddling Rose’s natural instinct of stabilizing sanity. “There is a prescription.”

“No.” Rose interrupted.

“May I finish?” asked Dr. Collier with a sip of glass water.



Rose sighed, lounged in her chair, but firmed her back for flexing posture. “Yes”, Rose listened.

“Trazadone is a serotonin modulator. It balances your mentality.” Dr. Collier mentioned.

Rose cautioned her worry, “I’m not trying to be a couch slum.”

“If that happens, call me. We can decide the next steps.” Dr. Collier proposed & and urged, “are you interested?”

Rose pondered for an answer. With sarcasm, she said, “sure.”

“I will send the prescription to your pharmacy.” Dr. Collier penned a notice with a slice from her masthead.

Nestled as a scavenger clue, the ballet studio recognized students who opened a blind eye to the room’s esoteric entrance miraged by light stained wooden panels.

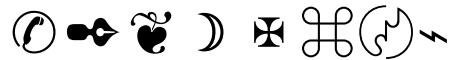
Every year, students charge the Dance’s Company’s ‘Welcome Back Table’. *First come first serve* bellowed the leaders as peers clambered for a signed spot.

Rose stretched her body on the staircase, while others cartwheeled down the hall, and bantered about local news. Brooke & Jeanie accompanied along the descent.

As her heels clicked with a striking clap of her palms, the students filtered into the studio by the orders of Madame Daria. Hushed about her heritage in Russia, she murmured about fleeing the fascist overthrow decades ago.

“Pronto!” Madame reverberated.

She led the class with a stern demeanor. Not a single stray hair fell from her high top bun. Many frightened themselves from



inquiring about her beauty regimen; if she even possessed a concoction. As a surprise, she integrated gender for certain classes.

Mixed sweats, jersey cloths, and athletic shorts swirled about the dancers. The ballerinas plied without holding the beam. Their reflections parallel against the clean mirrors, mantling the square & sunken room. Crevice windows geared sunlight from the lawn above.

Madame Daria instructed the line of dancers. Their feet pointed on their toes, bending their knees in and out.

“Firm the knees!” Madame demanded.

Rose bent to the command. Brooke maintained flexibility, yet exhaled a silent yawn. Jeanie anchored the beam and spurred raspberries from her lips.

“How much longer?” Jeanie wondered.

Brooke answered, “soon enough.

“Damn”

Rose chuckled an encouragement, “feel the burn, Jeanie! It relieves stress.”

Jeanie rolled their eyes, “Aye, aye captain; but I prefer sex.”

Smacking her palms toward the trio, Madame Daria’s force firmed their bodies as soldiers in a line up. “Adies, ilence!”

Their drill sergeant stormed the line.

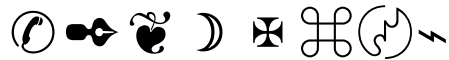
“Step ‘vay ‘vrom ‘wall!”

The class followed her order.

“Arabesque!” Madame instructed.

They form the position.

“Kick!”



Feet splice the air.

“Higher! Higher!”

Rose & Brooke followed along, while Jeanie goofed a jelly kick. A clearing of the throat churned from Madame Daria. “Higher! Higher! Kick Higher!

Their feet danced over the floorboards. They imagined surviving an internal collapse from the depressive fables of her *Red Shoes*; eternal fate dividing the artist away from both love & craft.

“Ake vive!”

Brooke, Jeanie, & Rose collapsed as dominoes.

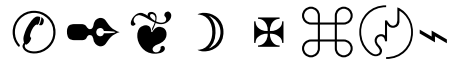
“No binge drinking or you’ll waste our time!” Madame Daria warned, as the class held a nervous chuckle to her acknowledgement of the heinous disease.

A few blocks away from campus, the trio ventured to their favorite café in town: Watermill Inn. Apartments stood above the dining room. Graduate students rented rooms from the host stand; archaic yet innovative.

Brooke, Jeanie, & Rose sat at the open door patio table. They poured an ice cold pitcher of fresh cut cucumber, lemon, & lime into their glasses. Their arms helped one another to their hunger.

Brunch wraps sealed the deal: tortillas with yellow rice, veggie substitute for sausage, celery, carrots, & vegan mozzarella. For the most part, nothing of substantial remembrance came to mind, except the random talk of romance.

“Have you been going out with anybody?” Rose asked the table.



Jeanie saved her choke with a sip of water, “I thought we were seeing each other.”

Brook proposed a toast, “true!”

*CLINC*

That evening, the trio fell to peer pressure: a sorority party. So, Rose invited Brooke & Jeanie to her dorm.

They sauntered around the quaint living space, brushing & painting makeup from the holiday haze & vanity bulbs. Culture prints inspired the enclosed walls. A breeze spindled through the window; waving a pinned Irish Flag; filtering the glass.

Rose reeled hangers of options from the closet. Brooke brushed away dust with a lint roller. Jeanie laid the clothes onto the bed: an athletic jersey with netted stockings, a pastel tunic dress with bandeau, & a sleeveless crop top with tight ripped denim jeans.

Their eyes pondered the results.

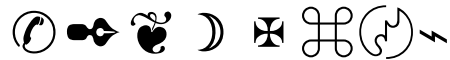
*Three...Two-*

Brooke, Jeanie, & Rose tackled a dive for the clothing.

Ascending from the darkness, the women strut in the middle of the road. Brooke glamoured the modern denim with crop. Jeanie sported athletic gear. Rose stood under a silver thorn crown, flowing the tunic.

Colored strobe lights glimmered from the Delta Pi Rho Theta house a block behind the library. Inside; Brooke, Jeanie, & Rose assayed the notorious hallways of the wonderland escape. Their favorite part: an old service staircase from the kitchen to the second floor.





So high from the weed, a Cheshire Cat smirked about the neon fog.

Brooke & Jeanie grinded a kiss to the music.

Rose danced on a table top. She offered her hand to an onlooking suitor, who controlled the surface with her. Their bodies pulsed a gyrating, however, shy liberation.

As the evening spun into the night, Rose smoked a joint on the roof porch, Gabling a curve view. Brooke & Jeanie chilled with her smoking. They avoided conversing with the eternal dread of bumming out, moving on to the next chapter in life, future dilemmas to be dismantled; an existential list.

The Greek letters crumbled from the second floor balcony. Neon lights flashed behind the curtains, as synths & drums escaped the front door. Leaving the party, the women walked to the middle of the road.

Rose rubbed her stomach, "Soft warm pretzels sound nice right about now."

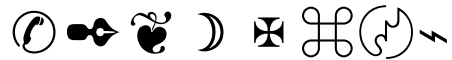
"With spicy mustard!" Jeanie chimed in.

Brooke breathed, "don't even get me started," as she face planted to the ground.

Jeanie refrained from guffawing as she hoisted her friend up.

Helping Brooke up from the street, Rose shocked herself. Standing between two houses across the street, she examined a stalker peering at her. He wore a black tee shirt tucked into his black jeans. His dilated eyes pierced through a jet black ski mask.

"Oh, my word!" Brooke slurred.



As Rose checked on her friend; within a blink of her eye, the man disappeared into thin air. Rose stared blank, while her jar cracked open.

“Rose!?” Jeanie asked.

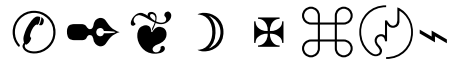
Brooke chimed in, “what’s the matter?”

Rose fabricated a reasonable response, “nothing, just tired.”

The friend group continued forward as they walked back to their beds. While never straying from her friends, Rose looked over her shoulder. She feared yet guarded her friends from the onlooking attacker hiding in the overgrown hedges.



II



I SAW THE HIDEOUS PHANTASM OF A MAN STRETCHED  
OUT,  
AND THEN, ON THE WORKING OF SOME POWERFUL  
ENGINE,  
SHOW SIGNS OF LIFE, & STIR WITH AN UNEASY,  
HALF-VITAL MOTION.

; STILL IT HAUNTED ME.

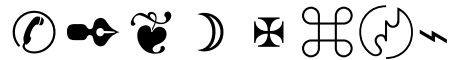
MARY SHELLEY



A whistle exploded along the Hartfield University pool.

The players, gender integrated, kicked a dive with a heart pace. Gleaming riptides held over the rushing bodies. Their nasals prevented chlorine with bursting bubbles of carbon dioxide.

Rose swam faster & forward. Edging the shallows, she flipped, kicked, & rolled the red octagon. Ignoring her opponents, the cheering crowds vanished from her eardrums. The gushing of water into her ears prevented any further distraction.



Her eyes glued to the prize. A few more strokes; Rose grabbed the deep wall & pulled herself to the deck. She lacked concern about her position & time that day.

Smacking the rubber cap from her red & blue scalp, Rose released the pressure on her skull. The only significance of placement at the moment preserved truth on sight of abuse.

Opponent from Hawthorne University, Frank Cronus, approached Rose without her consent. With a pinch on her buttocks. He snarled a laugh, wrapping his arm around her back with a tug to his chest.

“Prick!” She screamed out & blockaded the beast.

Water poured onto the deck. Frank sank.

#### SUFFOLK COUNTY v. FRANK CRONUS

Bearing a houndstooth blazer, Rose continued her stance on the testimony against her assaulter.

“The assaults & harassment continued from here. A night out left me calling authorities about a stalker. The operator’s response advised a follow up in person; by signing investigation documents & probable restraining orders.”

#### SUFFOLK FIRE DEPARTMENT: PHONE TRANSCRIPT

Miss Briar stood under the neo fluorescent glamor of the public glass telephone booth located between Faneuil & City Hall. She held the receiver at bare level.



"Suffolk Fire Department, How are we of assistance?"

"A man is following me."

"Are they attacking you?"

"No, just following me. I do not see him now. What should I do?"

"When you can, say 'over,' hang up the receiver, & run over to us."

### SUFFOLK COUNTY v. FRANK CRONUS

Rose Briar moved forward with the microphone, " The Suffolk Fire Department escorted my arrival to campus the night of this report. A few weeks later, Frank Cronus attacked in the parking of Hartfield's pool, when I denied advances on a date"

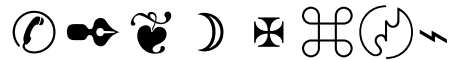
On that dreadful night, Frank Cronus shoved Rose Briar against a tree. He ripped at her clothes, while pressing her against the bark. She held her oxygen, fearing her suffocation.

"I SAID NO!" Rose cried out.

She kneed him in the crotch and scratched a punch to his dehydrated face. Frank wailed in pain, while tackling Rose to the ground.

### SUFFOLK COUNTY v. FRANK CRONUS

Miss Briar took a breath from her testimony. She looked her assailant in the eye & spoke.



"Frank Cronus assaulted me. If I gave him consent, which I did not, this court would not be in session. As he entered me, I screamed, 'No!'"

Frank thrust his body on top of Rose as she belted, "STOP!"

With her crumbled fist, Rose dug into the dark. With a smack, she punched him in the *fuc'in* face.

He fell over.

She fled further into the wooded paths of Norfolk County. Branches snatched at her face, while her feet dug into the Earth. Only the twinkling moonlight guided her narrow path.

Heavy breaths coughed from her chest. She dreaded screaming; fearing Cronus ambushing from behind. Rose sprinted further into the night. Hallucinations vivid her mind regarding the magic mirror locked away in the Evil Queen's tower.

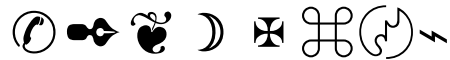
Pushing the shrubs away from her view, Rose found a road roaming by the trees. Water glinted on the cracked pavement. She climbed to the edge, while smudging her legs against the muddy incline from the forest to the street.

Looking both ways, Rose focused further down the road. A stop light flashed yellow. Baroque houses scattered the dark road: tall & dark. Spiraling madness isolated her wellbeing as she screamed out.

"HELP! SOMEBODY!" Her voice echoed.

A response never returned. Taking back her life, she limped a jog toward the stoplight. As her feet scraped the wet pavement, her eyes locked a seizure to the flashing ivory light. Her body spindled. Rose guarded a confidence to bear off and seek safety.





After a five minute jog, She approached the Norfolk County Police Department. Coming down the road, her perception maneuvered Rose to the building. She weaved her body through the patrol cars in the parking lot.

The glass door whipped open.

Her sneakers squeaked on the tiles. The door closed behind her as she stepped forward into the station. Before Rose, a glass wall separated the entrance.

Officers brisked through the cubicles behind the separation. He ignored the blood dripping from her forehead. The only person to acknowledge her presence was the Clerk Officer; who was the only woman on the force that night.

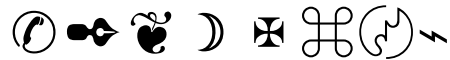
The Clerk stood from the chair & widened her eyes.

“May I help you?”

Rose hesitated an answer because her throat dried. Freedom vanished from personal sanctuary. Isolation rattled her brain. The walls closed in on her. The men’s voices bellowed into a harsh manner; lack thereof.

Fast on her heels, Rose turned from the desk & hurried out of the police station. Pushing the glass doors away from her plight, Rose jumped off the main staircase. She whisked herself away from the prison, by hurrying into the street.

Rose sought clarity through her confusion. Jogging in the middle of the street, she slowed down to catch her breath. Her body hung over her knees as Rose hugged her legs.



When the oxygen filled her lungs, Rose looked around at her surroundings. Nothing seemed familiar. Her brain attempted a recollection, but the panic suppressed her memories.

*Where the fuck am I?!*

Examining a trust with fate, Rose wandered further down the street.

A thundering lightning bolt burned into a tree. The bark split down the middle. Yellow embers scattered the ground. Rose lacked a flinch, while rain sprinkled from the sky.

On her journey, bending a curve through the street; She found the Fire Station. Rose strolled down the wide & robust ramp. Water gulped into the sewer drains.

The large garage doors remained open. Classic, efficient, & necessary engines & ambulances parked inside. A digital clock held the time above the lanes.

Rose froze before the doors.

In the garage, A firefighter & paramedic closed an engine door. As Jason Grant walked away, his attention focused on the stranger trembling among the door frames. He walked towards her.

“Who hurt you?” He demanded with calm.

Rose stumbled on herself. Grant lunged for her, with cradled arms. He caught Rose before she smacked the cement.

“We have you. Everything will be fine.”

Cardinal & cerulean lights flashed through the desolate streets. A siren screamed through the night. The treetops waved



above the speeding ambulance. Windshield wipers splashed away the oncoming rain.

Rose rested on a stretcher. Thick buckles & blankets covered her body. She rocked with the speeding motion. Her eyes gazed into the overhead light.

*Please, send me a sign.*

Grant leaned over Rose for medical attention.

"I am cleaning the cut on your forehead. This is an alcohol swab. It might sting." Ripping the tablet open, his purple surgical gloves unfolded the cleansing napkin. With gentle strokes, he cleaned the blood. While the cut dried, he ripped open a band aid. Tearing off the plastic flaps, Grant placed the band aid over her cut.

"Thank you." Rose whispered.

Ten minutes later, the ambulance arrived at the Emergency Room of Newton Wellesley Hospital. Grant & another paramedic wheeled Rose towards the Nurse's station.

"Patient's Name?"

"Briar, Rose."

"Rose, what brings you in?"

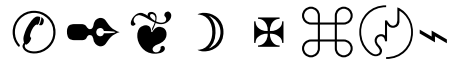
"Assault. Rape."

The Nurse guided around the desk and stood with Grant.

"Please wheel her to room five."

Inside the room, Grant assisted Rose off the stretcher and into the hospital bed. Pressing a lever, he lifted the back, for Rose to lay comfortable. He covered her with warm blankets.

"Rose, the nurses will take care of you now. Do you need anything else from me?" Grant asked.



Rose muddle, “courage.”

Grant held her hand, “take care.”

“Thank you.”

The nurse stabilized her vitals and placed an IV into Rose’s vein. The blood filled the needle. A water IV hung above Rose’s bed, as the H<sub>2</sub>O filled her system.

Rose told the nurse to call her emergency contacts. Her friends remained in the waiting room until further notice. Brooke cried into Jeanie’s chest. Jeanie held her tight as silent tears dripped down her cheeks, as well.

As the nurse flipped off the overhead lights, igniting the night lamps, Rose dozed off. In her dream, she floated beneath the submerged surface. Water engulfed her body as the light reflected a prism on the waves.

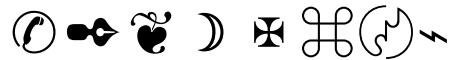
Her hand pointed her body to the surface. Rose kicked her feet, until a hand grabbed her ankle. She floundered. Air bubbles burst. She looked down to see a serpent. Cronus held her down

In the middle of the night, Rose lunged out of the bed. Seat poured down her face. After her sleep, the nursing staff placed her in the rehab wing. Rain splashed on her room window. The bathroom served as a night light.

Rose placed her feet on the ground. She slipped the pulse oximetry away from her index finger. Wrapping the blanket around her chest & shoulders, Rose paced to the window. She watched & listened to the rain splashing on the sill.

Bleached bolts flashed in the cloudy sky.

A gentle knock hummed on the door.



“Miss Briar? Is everything alright?” Asked the nurse.

Rose spoke, “Fever Dream...sorry for getting out of bed.”

“No need to be sorry. Do you need anything?”

“May I have a ginger ale?”

“Yes.”

“Thank you.”

When the Nurse closed the door, Rose zoned her vision through the scattered rain falls.

When the sun rose, Doctor Mandrakis came down the rehab hall. They held a clipboard and wore a clean overcoat.

Rose sat at a desk underneath the bedroom window. The Nurse gave her reading material since Rose became wide awake. She read *Gray's Anatomy* by Doctor Henry Gray.

A gentle rum bantered the door as Doctor Mandrakis stepped in. “Hello Rose. I am Dr. Mandrakis. Can you relay your emotions?”

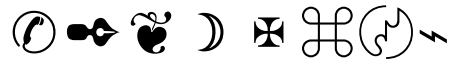
“I feel empty.” She crooned.

“I have your lab results. Would you like me to relay the information or come back later?”

“Time won’t change anything.”

Mandrakis read from the clipboard, “No sexually transmitted diseases were found in your system. H<sub>2</sub>O maintained hydration. Marijuana appeared in your blood. The forensic exam found DNA in your genitalia that did not match yours. We have the predator’s DNA.”

Rose defended herself, “Frank Cronus. He raped me.”



“All of this information is confidential between you and the hospital. Authorities lack access; unless, you consent for a further investigation.

“Please, let’s move forward with an investigation.”

Mandrakis placed the forms on the desk. As Rose read through the pages, she noticed the masthead crested on top of each page:

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

“When you read these over and agree, you can sign the consent confirmation. I will bring these to a colleague who will open the investigation.” Administered Doctor Mandrakis.

“I was not aware of the Bureau’s stance.”

“Too many citizens come through these doors surviving assault & rape. Some officials stand up to protect the individuals. I will leave you be. Do you need anything while I am here?”

“When can I be discharged?” Rose asked.

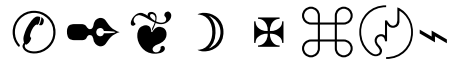
Mandrakis insisted, “If you feel confident, I can discharge you by noon.”

“Thank you.”

Doctor Collier, Brooke, & Jeanie guarded their friend out of the hospital.

She inherited the third floor apartment when the attorney read her Godmother’s will. When Rose discovered her Godmother paid off the unit, she collapsed to the ground. How can home be sweet without the love from her person who raised her?

Burrowed along the crest of Highland Park, her Roxbury dwelling glaring the rampion window of Fort Hill Tower. She



dreamed of climbing to the top, cutting off all her hair, braiding a ladder, & climbing down.

*How the years go by.*

Charred Cape shingles penciled the three family house on 51 Beech Glen Street. Warning signs stapled the stacked porch walls: *No Alcohol!* Due to the slanting beams. Marijuana amused the fading mint paint on the porch's wooden slats.

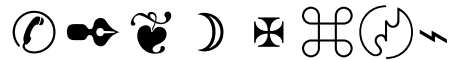
Following the day's schedule, a USPS employee dispensed envelopes into the slots at the bottom of the front steps. A convenient red & silver hydrant stood beside the skinny evergreen; planted on the curb.

A tea kettle whistled on the stove. Rose released the steel from the flame & turned off the heat. She poured the tea into a mug filled with: lavender tea bag, honeycomb suckle, cracked red & black pepper.

Ghost steam raised & swayed from the dish. Rose sipped by blowing on the liquid.

Peeling wet carrots, firm cucumbers, & purple onions; Rose sliced the vegetables for ingredients. On a wooden cutting board, Rose chopped the iceberg lettuce at an angle: shavings. Throwing the farmer's pick into a grand metal bowl, Rose grated a block of parmesan over the salad.

Her fist crunched a bag of Olive Garden croutons. She chuckled at the disdain her Godmother cursed upon the restaurant. Rose agreed, however indulged against the wishes. Newman Caesar dressing poured, while tongs mixed.



The doorbell interrupted her routine. Rose rinsed her hands & dried them with a dish towel. Descending from the third floor, a skylight glowed upon the octangular staircase. Rose reached the mudroom of the atrium and opened the door.

Sunlight poured in. A woman stood before Rose wearing sunglasses, a pressed button up, & khakis. She removed her glasses.

“Rose Briar?” the woman spoke.

“Yes?” Rose responded.

The woman lifted her wrist revealing her identification with the FBI. “I am Special Agent Abigail Kennedy with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. May we talk about the attack at Hartfield?”

“Yes, please come in.” Rose pointed Kennedy up the staircase as she locked the door. In the kitchen, they sipped from their tea, while sitting at the kitchen table. Kennedy declined a polite offer on the salad, as Rose postponed the meal in the fridge.

Light drew in from the clean windows. Fresh oxygen soothed from climbing leaf vines along the shingles. Kennedy leaned in, “did you make any sexual advances toward him?”

Rose stared point blank, “what do you mean?”

“Did you do or say anything that would turn on Frank Cronus?” Agent Kennedy cleared their throat.

“What kind of question is that!?” Rose demanded; perplexed.

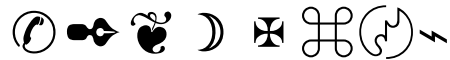
“It is something you will be asked on the stand.”

“Seriously?!”

“I will object to any of these questions. The judge might sustain me; sometimes not.” Warned Kennedy.

Rose flustered, “he attacked me!”





“The court is a rigid experience rattled with colonized & patriarchal confines. I believe you & I want to bring you justice. Do you want me to move forward with the investigation?” asked Agent Kennedy.

“Yes. Are you going to arrest him?”

“When the DNA tests match; yes I will arrest him. Until then, I can only bring him in for questioning. Would you like to remain anonymous when this goes to trial?”

Rose raised her chin with a stern answer, “No. I want him to see my face. How soon can you question him?”

A few hours later, Agent Kennedy tracked Cronus down. He slurred his words & punched a tender at a bar in Quincy. Trucks from the Bureau lined the store front. Locals scattered at the sight of authorities.

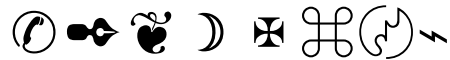
Searching the bar, Agent Kennedy cuffed Cronus & dragged him into the street. The US Army provided attention during the arrest. She spoke of his limited rights, “Anything you say will be used against you in the court of law.”

Commotion uttered the street. A camera bulb flashed.

Chelsea, MA stands for the offices of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. In the dim interrogation room, two way mirrors confine the holding room. Frank sat at the table with his hands cuffed.

Agent Kennedy questioned Cronus as he hunched over the table. She sat with her shoulders perched & ready.

“She asked for it!” Frank pleaded.



Kennedy raised an eyebrow, “how does that give you the right to attack & harm? You weren’t defending yourself.”

“Don’t trust her!” Frank warned.

“We will be conducting a DNA test,” informed Agent Kennedy.

Frank slammed his clenched fists on the table, “I want to speak with my lawyer.”

Agent Kennedy bit her lip & said, “You are in the Bureau’s custody, so I am your lawyer. If you neglect this DNA test, the press will have a field day pecking at you like vultures.”

Frank quieted his anger by leaning back in the chair.

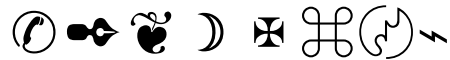
Hidden among the silver emerald glass scape of downtown Boston, Alcott Co. provided used books within Quaker Lane. Classical music hummed on low from a portable radio on the counter.

Rose acquired the manager position when she graduated from Hartfield. She prayed every night not to lose the job. Standing in an aisle, she held a stack of books. With each step, Rose followed the alphabetical order & placed the spines in their spot.

Customers browsed the shop. Newbury Comics tote bags appeared constant due to a quick walk to Faneuil Hall. A bulletin interrupted the music on the radio.

A news anchor spoke, “Breaking News: The Federal Bureau of Investigation reported: Officials arrested local athlete, Frank Cronus, & and charged him for domestic abuse allegations.”

Startling Rose, she dropped her pile of books & froze.



After ringing out the remaining customers, Rose locked the front door & swung the welcome sign to: CLOSED. The store remained quiet without shoppers. Only the slight chopping of the air spun from the industrial fans above.

In the quaint office, flipped through a crisp rolodex & dialed the business landline. Sitting in a reading chair, Rose listened to the dial tone ring.

The phone clicked with a greeting from Agent Kennedy.

Rose clarified her voice, “have they arranged a court date?”

“We will be in court next month. Cronus will stay in maximum security prison from now until a final hearing.” Stated Kennedy.

“I am nervous.”

“So am I.”

During her psychiatric session, Rose sat on the window sill. With the open frame, Rose smoked a joint. She offered a hit to Dr. Collier who declined. Grace sat in the chair; reviewing previous notes. Rose inhaled a puff. She placed her skull on the lap of her crossed legs.

Dr. Collier asked, “do you want to repel your statements?”

“What would that accomplish?”

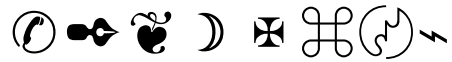
“Nothing.”

Thunder rumbled across the universe. A gust of cold air rattled the venetian blinds. Rose flicked the ashes into the gutter. She closed her eyes, letting the weather take control of mind.

*Can I just die?*



III

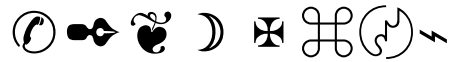


I COULD HEAR A NUMBER OF NOISES  
ALMOST LIKE THOSE IN AN ENGINE-SHED,  
AND THE PLACE ROCKED WITH THAT BEATING THUD.

H.G. WELLS

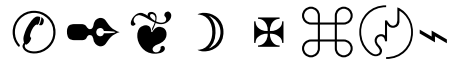
BUT YOU SAY WHATEVER IS GIVEN YOU IN THAT HOUR

MARK 13:11



Gloomy clouds draped the sky above the Suffolk Probate & Family Court, down Beacon Hill, & Behind the gold crested State House. Pedestrians lacked energetic movements to their abysmal destinations.

The Flags of the Commonwealth & Ireland hung above the gigantic steel metal pole. Their fabrics waved along the breeze.



Inside the courtroom, Judge Yates sat strong before the filled, yet quiet courtroom. Miss Briar sat with Agent Kennedy on the plaintiff side. They focus their eyes forward; ignoring Frank Cronus sitting on the defendant's side.

Brooke & Jeanie stood on opposite sides of the courtroom doors.

"I call the defendant, Frank Cronus, to the stand." Demanded Judge Yates.

Frank Cronus sulked his back into a firm stance. Waddling to the stand, his eyes never glanced at the Jury Box. Cronus stood before the courtroom & raised his hand for the oath.

"Swear to tell the truth & nothing but the truth."

"Swear."

*Yeah, bite me.*

As Cronus found his seat, Special Agent Kennedy grounded from the table. Her feet scraped the clean & reflective marble floor. Her stance anchored Miss Briar, Judge Yates, Frank Cronus, & the Jury. Agent Kennedy initiates a vernacular triangle among the people.

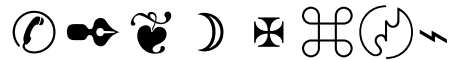
Agent Kennedy started, "why did you harm Rose Briar?"

"How did I harm her?" Frank Cronus scoffed, while his defense, Attorney Stella charged from the table.

"Objection, your honor!"

"Sustained."

Attorney Stella sat down, while Cronus cleared his throat. Agent Kenney furthered her questioning.



“How do you justify your DNA found in Miss Briar’s genitalia?”

“I believe those test are inaccurate, similar to lie detectors.”

Sarcastic wit spun from Agent Kennedy’s lips, “You must think the Earth is flat, even though she is round.”

Attorney Stella barged from behind the table, “objection!”

“Councilor, please clarify your statement.” Judge Yates spoke into the microphone.

Agent Kennedy defended her stance, “Mr. Cronus appears to alter an individual’s perception of reality.”

“Like how you forged my DNA that day you arrested me!” Spat Cronus.

BANG! BANG! Slammed the gavel. “Order in the court!”

Gasps sprang through the Jury & Public. Judge Yates turned to Frank Cronus with disdain. “You speak only when spoken to.”

Frank lowered his head, then raised his demon eyes toward Rose. She held her breath while surveying his empty soul. She wanted him dead in the street.

“Mr. Cronus, do you believe in the equality of the sexes?”

“How so?”

“Do you believe men & women are created equal?”

Frank Cronus coughed without covering his mouth. He tilted the microphone closer to his lips. Spit splattered the instrument. He arched his neck forward. “A woman knows her place because she should.”

“Prick” whispered from the entrance doors.





Agent Kennedy shook her head; disgusted. “No further questions, your honor.”

During recess, Brooke & Jeanie supplied mint hot chocolates from Duncan. Agent Kennedy reviewed a Bill of Rights. Rose stepped away from the crowd & lit a joint. The smoke filled her lungs & released the stress from her mentality. Everybody wore sunglasses.

When recess ended, defiance brewed in the confined courtroom. Rose took the oath at the witness stand & sat down. Attorney Stella cowered & slithered forward as a bloodsucker.

Attorney Stella asked, “are you intoxicated?”

“Objection, your Honor!” Belted Agent Kennedy.

Judge Yates defended Rose. “Councilor, even with evidence, your question is irrelevant to the situation!”

“Your Honor! I can smell marijuana from the witness stand.”

Rose spoke for herself. “Yes, I smoke during recess since the State of Massachusetts legalizes the consumption of Marijuana.”

“Why would you do these harmful things?” Spat Attorney Stella.

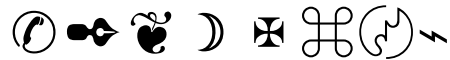
“My body, my choice.”

“How can you treat your body like this?”

Rose cleared her throat, “how can you client attack & violate my body!?”

Pinned as a bullseye, Frank sat firm in his seat. Attorney Stella followed with further questions; demeaning Rose. “Miss Briar, are you a prostitute?”

“No, but If I was, what is your point?” Pondered Miss Briar.



“In situations like these, prostitutes put themselves at risk.”

Attorney Stella’s bashful remark spiraled anger within Brooke. Jeanie bit her lip, while holding her friend back from dismantling the hearing with a tight punch to the face.

Rose spoke into the microphone, “Your Honor, I would like to defend every single sex worker regarding Mr. Stella’s egregious comments. Frank Cronus took advantage of me. I declared ‘no’. Without care for my wellbeing, he threw me to the ground. Frank Cronus raped me. So, Mr. Stella, you can choke on your words before you ever speak to a person, you arrogant son of a bitch!”

Commotion clamored in the courtroom. Brooke & Jeanie applauded their confidant. Agent Kennedy widened her eyes in shock. Frank Cronus spit on the ground.

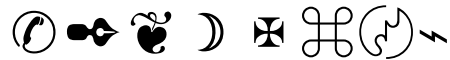
The Gavel banged! Judge Yates turned to Rose. “Miss Briar, you may not swear in the courtroom.”

Rose replied, “I understand.”

The court filed out of the session and divided among the Atrium of the Suffolk Probate & Family Court. Rose Briar held hands with Special Agent Kennedy. A reporter flashed a bulb with a shoulder press from oncoming security.

At her apartment, steam rose from the bathroom. Rose turned off the light & stepped into the hallway with a robe. A tight knot towel wrapped her hair above her head.

Opening the door to her bedroom, Rose turned on the light. The art prints, decorating the walls, hypnotized her view. She strives



for minimalist dwellings in her comfortable space. A queen size bed mounted a box spring in the corner.

Rose let down her wet hair. She grabbed a pick from the vanity. The prongs wiped away any moist tangles. Undressing from the robe, Rose hung the cloth on the open frame. She threw on an oversize t-shirt & Victoria Secret underwear.

Turning off the lights, Rose crashed onto the fluffy mattress. She wrangled herself among the pillows & blankets. As she reached for the blinds, the moon caught her attention. A glow defined her face in the darkness. She felt the soothing rays.

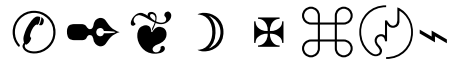
Rose popped a melatonin & closed her eyes.

Rose prepared for the rain: yellow rubber hood jacket, black combat boots, a black dress with warm leggings, & a translucent umbrella. She parted from her home & disappeared among the splashing rain.

She desired to clear her mind from the insanity of her current existence. Whenever Rose sought an equilibrium regarding her inner peace. An abandoned cathedral dilapidating on the county lines awaited her arrival.

Granite & stone bricks toppled the wet mud, scattered with leaves. The roof collapsed decades ago. Stain glass shattered the ground; a broken rainbow. Thick green vines of thorn braced the foundation.

Somehow, the altar remained firm; without the glorious cross of the Lord & Savior Jesus Christ. Rose climbed her way through



the rubble of a sacred ruin. Even without the roof, her feet still echoed on the cracked tiles.

Rose kneeled before the altar. Her black dress flowed from the wet rubber jacket. From the pocket, Rose held a black veil over her head. Rosary beads weaved between her fingers.

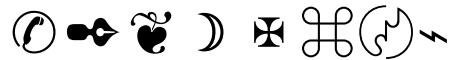
She prayed, *Hail Mary, Full of Grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed are thee amongst people. Now & until the hour of our death.*

Closing statements began in the courtroom. Friction tensed between Rose Briar & Frank Cronus. Each person sat on opposite sides of the courtroom. Brooke & Jeanie sat from row with the public.

Agent Kennedy stood from the table and glided her stance toward the Jury Box. “Today, we stand before a woman who survived a random attack of violence. Today, we also stand before an unhealthy man who harmed a stranger for his heinous desires. Think of all the other women and people who fear to come forward? Now please think why they do not report their survival of crimes. Is it because they are shamed? Is it because they lack resources? Or is the truth simpler than the unknown? Survivors battle fear from further hurt.”

Agent Kennedy swayed the Jury’s attention to her client, Rose Briar.

“People like Rose Briar will save the lives of any victim who survives random violence & domestic abuse. Her courage topples boundaries. You have the power to keep our society safe from danger. Does Frank Cronus deserve to walk free? No. Does society



deserve the terror lurking within Frank Cronus? No. Why should we let this happen again? Today we can prevent further harm. Thank you for your time.”

Agent Kennedy crossed the room and sat with Rose. Attorney Stella pat Frank on the back and murmured his gambling bribe. Stella sauntered toward the Jury Box, as gangsters displayed their knock off zoot suits. He coughed without covering his mouth & scratched his groin.

The Jury squirmed.

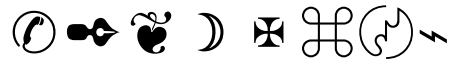
“There are only so many types of people who live in our world. For the most part, you will find hard working men like Frank Cronus. He minds his own business & leads any team to success. But as in any contrast, you have finger pointers such as Rose Briar. She is your typical damsel who decided to cry wolf. I have nothing much more to say about Miss Briar, other than I hope she seeks psychiatric assistance.”

Attorney Stella churned his out of shape body to the public. “Frank Cronus is an innocent man. Let the evidence show that Frank Cronus never assaulted Rose Briar.”

Judge Yates excused the Jury to finalize their decision. The courtroom dispersed for a recess. Rose leaned against a railing, while Jeanie & Brooke comforted her. Agent Kennedy stood guard.

The sun shone through the glass roof. Heels echoed through the hollow chamber. Hallways circulated the design into a frenzy. Officials walked across the marble, dozens of yards below.

Rose zoned her attention onto the floor below. She shut her eyes & fell over the railing. Her body descended. She floated fast to



the bottom. Before her body crashed to the ground, Rose opened her eyes.

The entire courtroom stood before the Judge. Attorney Stella rubbed Frank's lower back. Agent Kennedy held Rose's hand. Judge Yates spoke into the microphone.

"The Jury finds Frank Cronus guilty."

Relief exhaled from Rose.

Frank sank in his chair.

Judge Yates read the disastrous sentence. "Frank Cronus shall serve eight years in prison."

Crash & Burn.

Temper fluttered across Rose's cheeks. Agent Kennedy beamed a glare to the abuser. Frank Cronus & Attorney Stella smiled smug grins as the men hugged.

"Case dismissed." Judge Yates clambered the gavel.

Rose charged the bench, "Your honor! The minimum sentence is ten years! He raped me !"

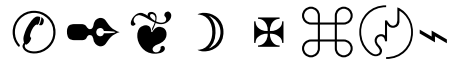
Judge Yates ignores Rose and exits the court.

Agent Kennedy stood behind Rose. "Please."

Rose pulled away from Kennedy's security. She crossed the courtroom and stormed Frank Cronus' table. As the men noticed her arrival, spit flew from Rose's mouth and splattered Frank Cronus in the eye.

"Burn in hell!" Rose screamed & marched her way through the public & and out of the session.

Frank Cronus wiped away the spit as officers cuffed him for arrest.



Brooke, Jeanie & Agent Kennedy stormed after Rose.

Sprinting down the stairs, through the atrium, & under the spiraling rotunda; memories of field trips to the MFA & Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum flashed gold & silver memories.

Bursting through the front doors of the Suffolk Probate & Family court, Rose held up her hands to the flashing of journalist pulps. She pushed her way through the crowds. Without looking both ways, Rose darted onto New Chardon Street.

Her body dodged oncoming traffic. Car horns beeped. Jumping over the hoods of cars, Rose walked up the yellow line. Brooke, Jeanie & Agent Kennedy shouted her name as they chased after her.

Rose ran up the street and turned off into the courtyard of the Department of mental Health. The brutalist structures shielded her anger. She paced back & forth, combating her frustration. Agent Kennedy found her client breaking down. Brooke & Jeanie rushed over for assistance.

“This is not fucking fair! This is outrageous! He must rot!”  
Rose argued.

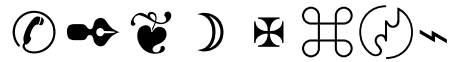
Agent Kennedy spoke soft, “We can further the investigation. I hope he never attacked another person, but if another survivor comes forward, the court will sentence him further.”

“That is not enough! I want him dead!”

“I do too.” Jeanie insisted.

Brooke whispered, “same.”

Fury burned across Rose’s face. Wrinkles lined her forehead.  
“Hopefully somebody kills him inside prison...Can we hire somebody to execute his murder?”



Jeanie bit her index finger.

Brooke shut her eyes & sighed.

Agent Kennedy paused in shock. “Do you know how illegal and horrible that sounds just yards away from the court house?!”

“I do not care.”

Agent Kennedy reached for Rose’s hand. “Yes you do.”





IV



IT'S DONE, TO PUNISH ME FOR KEEPING FAITH.

ANTIGONE & SOPHOCLES



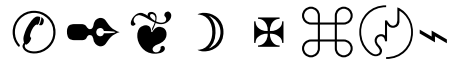
Sunlight broke the clouds. The planet's rays bounced & glided the silver emerald glass landscape of Downtown Boston. Alcott Co. bustled with locals & tourists. Customers scattered the aisles of the hidden gem. They skimmed through spines, while reading from the golden glow of the pages.

Rose sat at the counter flipping through a stack of DC comics. A sour blue raspberry Charm lollipop spindled on her tongue. The front door chimed the bell above the frame.

A tall and heavy; yet muscular man entered the store.

"Welcome!" Rose greeted while eyeing the sketches.

Due to her memories suppressed by current optimism, Rose lacked recognition. She felt a connection from mutual attraction, but



strayed from prying on a stranger. Her memory forgot this man was Jason Grant.

“Hello,” Grant waved.

“Please let me know if you need anything.”

“Will do, thank you.”

Jason flexed his defined & wide chest toward the eclectic & massive collection of titles. He stepped into an aisle & scanned the Horror section. He squatted, while the tight denim morphed to his rugged legs. Grant admired the front cover of Rose’s comic: Poison Ivy avenging the environment by destroying capitalism.

Grant found the courage to approach Briar.

She put down the comic book, “Hey!”

He cleared his throat into the sleeve of his shirt & apologized. Hand sanitizer sprayed into his hands from the bottle on the counter. “I am looking for *Dracula*. Cannot remember the author for the life of me.”

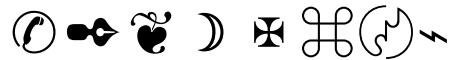
Rose rounded the counter and guided her customer to the designated spot.

“Stroker, Bram,” recollected Rose.

“Ahh! For some reason I thought Poe wrote the book.” Grant sighed.

“What a notable & wild crossover.” She geeked.

Rose lifted her index finger along the shelves. Her arm followed along the industrial furniture donated from an abandoned warehouse. Rose stretched her back, sending her elbows to her knees.



“Found it.” She swipes the paperback & and hands it to Grant. “There might be another copy in Romance.” She continued.

Grant smiled, “thank you.” He stumbled over his words, so she waited for him to come to his senses. “Please excuse me for stepping over boundaries. My name is Jason Grant. I am a paramedic.”

He remained confidential due to the browsing customers.

Rose raised her eyebrow with slight confusion. A recollected blur sparked through her synapses. She remembered his jawline & bright eyes. Her face melted in a somber joy.

“Very nice to see you.” She shook his soft & strong hand. “Thank you for your service that night.”

“I came by to check up on you. I can leave If I am being inappropriate.”

“No! Not at all!”

“May I purchase this book.”

“A public domain? Have it, for your service.”

“I insist.”

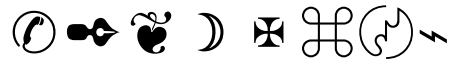
“Well there is a tip jar on the counter. You saved my life. The book is yours.”

Grant thanked her with a dipping nod of his head. He pried his wallet from his tight jean pocket. Grant fished out a crisp ten dollar bill & dropped the currency into the sticker covered jar.

Rose sat at the counter and read her adventures. Jason sat in a chair adjacent to the counter. Their eyes connected a glance with every page turn.

A customer approached the counter. Rose rang them out.

“Have a nice day!”



“You as well!” The doorbell chimed.

Rose & Jason prospered their cozy game of eye contact with nervous laughs. A mutual attraction warmed between them.

*Fate never changes.*

Rose hummed her way through the fresh produce of a market in Roxbury. Eternal bliss signified her concealed joy. She held a basket at her hip, while reading from a penned list.

Customer appalled at her shoulder peering from her ripped collar sweatshirt. Even the skirt hem flowed way past her finger tips.

*Damn colonizers, leave me alone!*

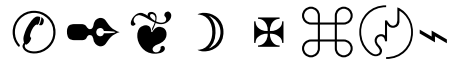
Some customers also pried for the makeup hidden behind her classic Ray Ban sunglasses.

Rose placed a head of lettuce, carrots, cucumbers, grapes, strawberries, almond Hersey chocolate, & orange juice into her basket. She followed the painted floor arrows to the cashier & placed the basket onto the belt.

As Rose placed the items along the conveyor, she leaned over as an inspection to the periodical stand. Today’s issue of the *Globe* shot fumes through the chambers of her heart. The tissue within closed her lungs.

### **ABUSER RELEASED AFTER FIVE YEAR SENTENCE**

A dark photo of Frank Cronus leaving Walpole State Penitentiary haunted the front cover. She blinked her eyes, hoping the headline was a misprint.



Customers invaded her personal space, by cowering behind Rose. As she read the column, the cashier pulled down on the paper. “Are you buying the paper or not?”

Rose assented, “I am.”

“Slut” slurred a customer behind her.

Rose craned her neck to the random individuals blending together with crass mediocrity.

“What did you say?” she whispered a demand.

“You heard me.”

Looking at the cashier for safety & assurance, the cashier followed in suit with the despicable & rude customers. Rose eyed the store for somebody. Nobody stepped up to the plate. Not a single soul uttered an Irish whisper for her advocacy.

*How dare he.*

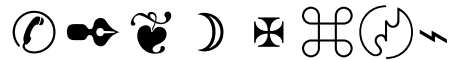
Raising her chin high above the peddlers, Rose abandoned the purchase & filed out of the market.

A customer spat, “She’s not wearing a bra!”

Dressed in an oversized, rib cut shirt, topping tight neon biker leggings, & athletic Nike’s, Rose curled weights before the mirrored wall. She decided to sweat out her anger by traveling over to the West Roxbury Planet Fitness.

She bore a Ukrainian relief Red Sox cap to disguise her face. Every rep, she inhaled & exhaled. Her bulging & defined muscles skewed any onlookers from approaching her.

Rose dropped the weights with a hearty gruff: bang, bounce, break.



She roamed her way back to the apartment without care or speed. All she wanted was to be left alone. Tangerine creamsicle, blush cotton candy, & lavender burst across the evening sky; rain ahead, maybe?

Rose ignored the Orange Line from Forest Hills. She needed the fresh air & extra steps. A cool breeze swept through the Emerald necklace, sending a chill upon her sweaty back.

Under two hours, she arrived to her neighborhood. Fort Hill Tower scraped the blissful atmosphere. Rose untied her kicks & kicked them off. She held the shoes & walked barefoot through the grass park.

The living room light shined from the top window of her apartment, specked at the edge of the park. She strut her body aimless to her sanctuary.

*Godmother, I miss you.*

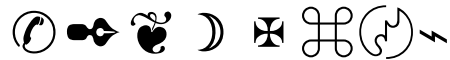
Cracked & jagged boulders swiveled from the Earth as crooked teeth, waiting for braces. She sauntered down the ledge, avoiding the loose pebbles.

Her external safety vanished from the group of hecklers, sixty year old men, drinking cheap booze on the sidewalk bench. The men had less teeth than fingers. His hair vanished from the cheap cigarette smoke. Burn holes scattered their dirty & musty clothes. Disgusting & scary wrinkles frowned on the men's faces.

"What a fuc'in cunt. & catch this, she's eating a hot dog and sliding it down her throat like it's a throbbing cock."

Rose slid on her shoes & tied them. She broadened her shoulders, as battle, & crossed the barren street. Her eyes glued a





vision to the front door. Rose never glanced from the chromed handle

“Sexy legs! Fine evening” the dirty heckler whistled.

Rose ignored the muttered drawl. She swerved from the imps.

“Aint ya gonna say hello, sweet ass?!”

She slid her keys between her fingers, just in case he ever dared approaching her stoop. Rose pushed the key into the door & turned the handle.

“You aint lady like miss priss!”

Rose flew open the door, rushed in, & slammed the timber behind her. She double locked the front door. Anxious fear pushed Rose, a double step, around the mudroom staircase.

A large metal ‘three’ beared the front door. Rose locked herself in for safety. She hurled the door behind her with a lock & chain. Rose placed tea bags into her sneakers & left them in the hall closet.

Turning on the kitchen light, Rose searched the fridge & grabbed a troth of filtered water. She found a cup from the overhead cabinet & placed it on the counter. Bubbles poured into the cup.

Rose swigged it back & poured another glass.

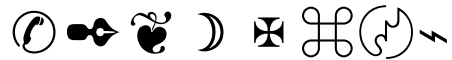
*Thank God.*

The devil sang to her from the cracked windows. “Amazing grace! Come sit on my face. Don’t make me cry, I need your pie!”

Water choked in her esophagus.

“Come out piggy! How about a lil’ fuck. Oink! Oink!”

Rose crashed the windows and stormed to the back staircase. The overhead light bulb flickered as Rose ascended into the attic.



Dust floated from the floorboards. Sweat dripped her forehead from lack of insulation.

Complete silence filled the slanted storage space. Rose fell to her knees and stretched through a fetal position. Her heart cried out.

*I will strangle with the Goddamn Christmas wreath!*

Relieving her resentment, Rose close fist punched & smacked the floorboards; over & over.

Outside, the heckler finished off their illegal cocktails. Their hands shook through a ghetto gesture. Splitting cigarettes the scumbags disintegrated into the black night.

Mucus splattered the curb.

A heckler drank from his paper bagged bottle. He crossed the street & climbed the lawn. He stumbled onto a boulder, scraping his skin. "Fucker!"

He found his balance and climbed upward. Highland Park frowned upon the nuisance. With every swig from his bottle, his attention remained on the tower. He appropriated the structure.

"Izasbigasmydick," laughed the heckler.

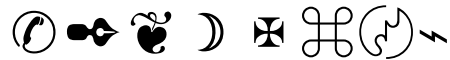
He stumbled around and collapsed on a park bench. He sat with his back against the boards, swig. "World beabettah place ifdyajussmanup!" The bottle glared on his eyes.

Crickets chirped in the bushes.

Smash, the bottle shatters.

"Sunbitch!"

His disgusting toes kicked the glass around.



From afar, Rose emerged; dressed all in black. Her leather gloved hands wielded a Strode kitchen knife. She geared toward the heckler, on her toes.

Snap, broke a twig!

He gasped, while turning around.

Thrusting the blade under the starry reflection, Rose stabbed him in the neck three times. Blood dripped from the gashed wound. The heckler convulsed & collapsed to the ground.

“Uc’inslut!”

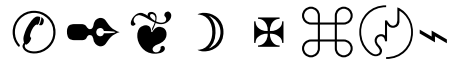
Adrenaline rushing through her veins, sent Rose to stab his heart; twice. He spit blood and stifled a cry. Rose slashed his throat; silence. The blood drowned the concrete slabs, as his hand waved for help.

Energy aroused Rose, witnessing life disappear from his wretched body. Waiting for his life to vanish, Rose walked back to her house.

Under the steamy tub faucet, Rose cleansed & rinsed the blade with bubbling detergent. Draining the tub; scrubbing bleach, Pinesol, & Windex; Rose bathed with her clothes on. She chuckled as a Siren feasting upon the hunting sailors.

The wet clothes hung from the curtain rod. Rose wrapped her body in a robe with her hair tied in a towel. Falling through the looking glass, Rose moisturized her face with: Aveeno & Neutrogena.

In the bedroom, Rose slipped a tunic dress over her torso. Sitting on the mattress, she secured her feet into black Dr. Martin’s combat boots. Dark ballet lace wrapped the tongue to a bunny ear.



She grabbed the Polaroid camera from her vanity & stood before the vanity. Snap. Flash. Flicker.

The doorbell rang.

Stomping down the staircase, she opened the door. Officer Finland glimmered from the traumatic glow of red morphing blue into purple. Rose studied his bushed, yet shaped mustache above his lip.

“Miss Briar? Officer Finland. A man named Martin Doge was found murdered in the park across the street. We identified him from numerous warrants.” Informed the Officer.

“Was he a criminal?” Rose assumed.

“Yes, domestic abuse cases. He never showed in court. Are you safe, Ma’am?”

“Yes. Thank you.” She breathed. Before she shut the door, Officer Finland held the plank open. “I am sorry the court system failed you by letting that asshole free.”

The statement combust Rose’s contemplation. “You read the court statements?”

“It is my duty to protect you and every citizen.”

“Just like how your operation arrested me at every Women’s March.” Rose dared a snark.

“Well, that was not me. I am sorry for the trouble. I honor your civil rebuttals. Hell, I even marched a few times myself.”

“Sure.”

Ring! Ring! Chimed the landline from upstairs.

“Officer, I need to catch that. Do you need to come in?”



“Not tonight. But, Miss Briar; I will be of assistance. Call the precinct anytime & I will help you.”

“Thanks. Goodnight.”

“Night!”

Rose shut the door. Finland? Hmmm. Such a code, especially with the petit rainbow pin over his heart.

Ring! Ring!

Rose dashed up the stairs and into her place. She pulled the phone from the receiver. “Yeah?”

“Brooke & I are heading over to the bar? Are you on your way?”  
Jeanie asked over the call.

“Be there soon.”

Click.



V



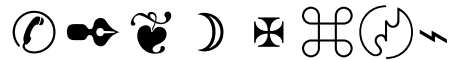
SHE HAS SEEN TOO MANY “REVOLUTIONS GO BACKWARDS”  
IN HER CASE NOT TO HAVE AN UNSETTLED FEELING  
ABOUT THE WHOLE OF OUR VAUNTED  
DEMOCRATIC SCHEME OF GOVERNMENT...

AND THEN THERE ARE THE SECTARIAN  
& SECRET SOCIETY LINES  
INTO WHICH THE MASSES GROUP  
THEMSELVES SOCIALLY IN LARGE NUMBERS.

IDA B. WELLS

SHE HAD BROKEN OF THE IRONCLAD RULES.  
FROM NOW ON SHE WAS GOING TO BREAK A LOT OF RULES

JACQUILINE SUSANN

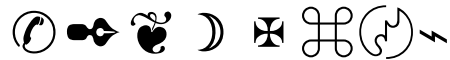


Rose descended the staircase of the Orange Line stop. Her boots armored & mounted across the platform. She crossed the safety line, balancing her posture along the bumpy yellow paint. Her feet lingered further.

Few commuters stood on the platform. Some pointed their way through the MBTA map, as a jigsaw puzzle. Others danced along the benches, playing tag with their skateboards.

“Orange Line Train to Oak Grove is now arriving. Please Stand Back,” announced the familiar & robotic conductor.





Headlights blasted from the tunnel. While below, this station lacked a full ceiling. Clouds blew across the darkness above. Rose watched as the locomotive pulled into the station.

Her hair woosh from the wind. The train cart stops. Rose steps aside in order for passengers to exit. Once clear, Rose onboarded the cabin. Ding, ding, the doors closed behind here. Once the locks cleared, the train departed the station.

Electricity snapped bolts through the dim lit tunnels. A hottie waved at her while respecting boundaries. She followed with a blink of a wink & regarded their personal space.

Rose spun her torso to windows, as the cabin broke out of the tunnel, she spectated at the buildings zipping above. Butterflies fluttered in her stomach. She bit her lip and felt a personal orgasm from the person on the other end.

Their chests parallel one another. As astronauts bounced from lack of gravity, The two adults pulled closer. Their bodies melted together, as their hands secured their asses.

“Did you go to Mount Alvernia?”

“Yeah. Catholic Memorial?”

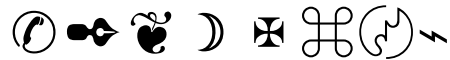
“Nah, Roxbury Latin.”

“Figures”

Without haste, the strangers kissed with their eyes closed.

*Boston, look what you made me do!*

The couple decided to arrive at Back Bay station. Landing on the platform, the two army saluted the conductor as the train left the station. Gearing toward the stairs, the acquaintances avoided the



delay & problematic malfunction of the escalators; firmer asses for sure.

Crossing the platform, they weaved through the oncoming commuters. Outside they swapped numbers at a clean payphone.

“Leave a message on my line & I’ll do the same.”

“Sure thing.”

Rose left them a message.

“Your name’s Riley?” She heard on the voicemail.

“Miss Briar?” They asked.

“Don’t wear it out.”

“See you around.”

“Peace out.”

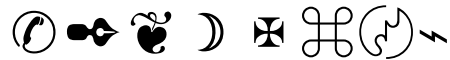
Newbury Street runs the catwalk. Anybody who is anybody dares a modeling strut; not on the sidewalks, dear; in the middle of street. Put the elite in their place.

Rose achieved environmentalist socialism. Headlights spot her light. Bicycles whizzed by as chariots. She held her head high, peering at the bricked structures longing above.

She wondered about that guy she used to hook up with, who worked at that chain restaurant based on a show.

*Where did he go? Like the rest of them, scrapbook flourishment.*

Weeping Willows lurked over the Public Gardens. White swans gloat with the green mallards on the pond. Marijuana smoke sizzles in the air. Car horns blast in the distance. Cliques chuckle. The globe lights brighten the infamous walkway.



Emerging from obscurity, Rose strode, foxy, across the Suspension Bridge. She only snapped the prom photos for the Latin ongoing graduates. For now the magnetism jolted any onlookers.

Burnouts wearing ski caps & college students practicing their notebook journalism gasped for air at her strike. Remaining calm, some hold an applause. Others wish for a disposable flash.

Rose winks & flips her flowing hair. As she crosses the bridge palleted with impressionist blotches, Rose dissolved into the twilight.

Crossing along the Commons, Rose climbed the mount. She admired the silver statue of Malcolm X. The Gold dome begged a cry for Veruca's meltdown. Bracing herself for the civil war monument, Rose climbed the steps of Melissa Joan Hart.

*Cinderella, don't trip on your boots.*

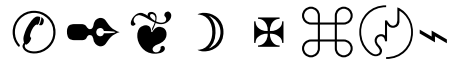
Many protested she screamed against misogynists & battle away dirty cops seeking a paycheck rather than societal healing. The front porch of the State House called for her.

*Break in for your freedom*

A positive tear reverb middle school outings. Well, have a move on; the future shall be at hand! She descended the blocks and found herself on Bosworth Street. Rose cornered the pub & loved the waving Irish Flag: rustic & vintage.

She opened an Altoid box & pulled out a joint. Holding the smoke on her lips, with a flick of her wrist, the lighter ignited. Flames rose from the rolled paper.

Inhaling the smoke, Rose imagined the narrow windows as a Hopper original. When the bagpipes slammed upon the table tops:



The bleached blondes, scorching auburns, & wild brunettes hollered a realist movement & party.

Rose roamed down the street, as the women inside recognized her random beauty. Knocks rang on the window. She blew a kiss. Her lipstick printed the fresh rinsed windows.

At the end of the street, a split staircase deceives through the sculpture of the stone wall. On the abandoned restaurant patio, convenient for study space, the overhang bears Province Street.

Cascading the cobble steps, Rose finished her joint by scraping the burn across the stones. She hated litter, so she placed the paper in her back pocket.

SMACK

Colliding on the black pavement of Province Street, Rose inspected the streets for oncoming cars; just people enjoying their night, skateboarders, & and an artist painting on an easel.

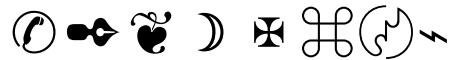
“May I look?” Rose inquired.

The artist held out the brush, “your turn.”

Rose remained calm as she gawked at the expressionist & obstruct fluorescent glow of the street portrait. Her grips swirled a dusty blush. As a pirate, she struck with one eye. The bristles flecked at the descent of her cobblestone; an open passage longed for remembrance.

“Magnificent. Ciao”

The artist splattered the bristles onto the sidewalk for an urban depiction & followed along with their work. Rose’s vision lingered to the fine dining transcending the enormous black windows. Couples toast and cheer.



Strobing bulbs focus her attention. A Barcade called VERSUS, plastered the building as an amusement house vortex. The location stood smack as a wedged shoe box. Digital neon lights flashed from the windows above Province Street.

Rose transcended into Wonderland. After flashing ID to the bouncer, Rose climbed the quadrant of a staircase. Video consoles lined the wall's monuments. As she stands on the landing, a host greets her.

"Five dollar cover."

Rose shrugged her shoulders while sliding a purple to the host. Weaving through the crowds like Tetris, Rose stood before the bar. Hurdles of people blocked her from the counter top. She waits calm, patient, & polite as men & women cut her spot.

She stretches her neck in chance & hope for the bartender's attention. Rose moved up the line, when a bartender waved to her. He projected a broad voice.

"What can I get for you!?"

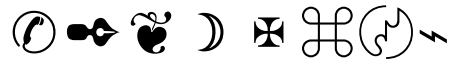
As the customers recognize the Bartender's attention upon Rose, the crowd parts as the biblical Nile. Rose inches forward. She broadens her shoulders before the tides roll in.

"Hi, may I have a Jack & Coke with grenadine."

"Coming right up."

"Thank you."

Securing her spot at Donkey Kong, Rose sipped from her bubbling beverage. Mario sprints across the red prism. The character climbs a ladder & jumps the rolling barrels. Mario jumps for a hammer & slams the running blue flames.



Rose arches with a flexing lunge. Her eyes never leave the hypnotic screen. Anticipation bites upon her smooth lips. Somewhere in the crowd, a college student mosh pits a stumble into Rose.

“Watch it,” Rose snapped.

“Somebody pushed me!”

Rose ignores the excuse of a plea. The guy rips from his drink & wipes the saliva from his chapped lips. He chugs the rest of the drink, while prying over Rose’s shoulder.

Mario reaches Peach’s platform as Donkey Kong abducts her.

“Jump” squealed the rando.

Her eyes roll a veiny pulse to the back of her skull. She maneuvers the joystick: up, down, side to side.

“Come on! Run faster!”

“I’ve got it, thank you!”

Her proficient request & ultimate warning, jerked the guy away. Offense befuddled his dry face. He stares down her spine.

“Hey, lemme buy you a drink.”

Rose ignores his advance.

“Come on! My treat.”

She holds her breath until her face turns a numb blue.

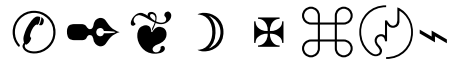
“No thank you.”

“Don’t be such a prude,” he pinched her elbow.

Bulging her eyes, with a twist & push; Rose barks a whisper.

“Fuck. Off. Now.”

He murmurs a slur as other women march him away.



Later that evening, Rose leaned against the glorious Ms. Pacman console. Brooke ran the pink ribbon yellow orb around the tectonic maze of walls; eating petrified zombies.

“Does my skin look clear?” Brooke asked.

“Yes,” Rose told the truth.

“Look closer.”

Rose saw the makeup covering subtle blemishes of dry patches.

“Are you on your period?”

“It ended last week.”

“Binge on Chocolate?”

“Milk & almonds.”

“Dab toothpaste on your breakouts before going to bed.”

“Cool. What else should I do?”

“Pour boiling water into your bathroom sink. Scrub it with dish detergent. Drain & rinse the bowl. Fill it with cold water. Drop petals of daisies, lavender, & roses. Rinse your face with the water when you wake up & when you go to sleep. Use your kitchen sink for everything else. “

“How long does it take?”

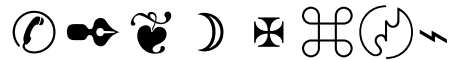
“A week. Let me know how it works.”

“Certainly!”

Jeanie charged a hip tango through the crowd. She carried a round of seconds for her pals. They bear hugged her.

“Can I take over, babe?” Jeanie batted her eyelashes.

“For sure.” Brooke yelled over the music and game effects. They held hands over the joystick before switching gears with a swaying thrust of the hips.



“No whammies! No whammies!” Jeanie fell into the whirlpool.

Sometime along the evening, lounged around a booth. Glass bottles, popcorn bowl, pretzel appetizers with spicy mustard, sleeves of gum, & silverware scatter the table.

Picking at the rest of their food, techno turbulence & guitar riffed house music amplify the bar.

Brooke broke a rule about mentioning work on a night out, “If I close on the housing deal; within about six months, I can purchase my own place!”

“I’m moving in.” Jeanie smiled.

Rose joined in, “same!”

“You will not be left out to dry.” Brooke raised their drink. The group howled a cheer. Clink, clanged the glasses.

In the restroom, Rose washed her hands in the sink. Brooke & Jeanie shared a joint by the open window. Rose dried her hand under the air dryer. She plucked at her makeup.

Brooke spoke to her friend. “Rose, you seem better; not only on the outside. Your soul feels happy.”

“One day at a time,” Rose repeated.

“I hope that prick burns in hell.”

“He doesn’t even deserve the Inferno.”

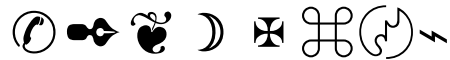
“Empty vessel rotting in a casket of worms?”

“A girlfriend at the ACLU is pushing for a further sentence.”

“I want him to vanish,” declared without crying.

Brooke & Jeanie place the joint on the edge of a sink. They joined their pal with a communal hug. They pressed kisses on each forehead.





Rose, Jeanie & Brooke, beat the final call. They left VERSUS around one forty five in the morning.

“I am heading to my place.” Rose mentioned.

Jeanie insisted, “Everybody sleepovers at mine.”

Before heading to the South End, the trio ran through Faneuil hall. They sang siren songs for any daring sailor submitting themselves to the bright arch tunnels of the landmark.

Twenty minutes of grazing through the streets, they arrived at Jeanie’s brownstone. Jeanie ascended the stoop. She unlocked the front door.

“I forgot how large your place is.” Rose dried her mouth. She holds Brooke’s hand as a hiking support. When Jeanie opened the front door, Jeanie belted about the foyer.

“Is that Italian marble!?”

A large pizza box steamed from the coffee table. Brooke, Jeanie & Rose relaxed around the couches & floor. Blankets, pillows, & plates scattered the room.

They enjoy the munching of a treat.

Jeanie hypothesized, “why can’t dating be like ordering a pizza?”

“Alright sis, try not to objectify!” Brooke repelled.

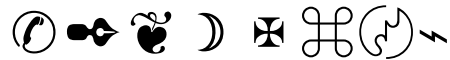
“True. But, why do men have the privilege of ordering us?”

Rose clarified, “It’s not his privilege. It’s his abuse.”

Jeanie swung another slice on her plate. “He expects an hourglass waist line, while he bulges a beer in horrible khakis.”

“Gross.”

“The mantra about men aging like fine wine needs to wither.” Declared Rose.



Brooke continued, “men sweep women under the rug the moment a wrinkle appears.”

Jeanie laughed with sarcasm, “I’m so ready for my hair color to fade away. Women with græy hair feel & look electric. Legit.”

“That turned me on.”

They cheer the running mozzarella slices.

“It cycles with that expectation of bowing to a man.”

Rose squirmed, “it makes me want to break glass.”

Brooke & Jeanie catch their breath.

“Oh sis, are you still drunk?”

“Sober.”

“Are you seeing therapy?”

“Yes. You?”

“You told me you would refer me.”

“Let’s not get volatile.”

Awkward silence spaced the strength of their triangle.

Brooke chimed in, “How much does a polar bear weigh?”

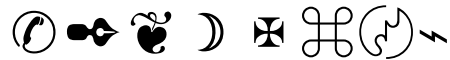
“How much?”

“Enough to break the ice.”

*Men caused the climate crisis.*

Eyes rolled. A lighter sizzled. Slouched on the stoop: Brooke, Jeanie, & Rose stifled from a joint. The smoke evaporated into the night air. Street lights flickered across the dark street.

A waking dream marched before them. Nineteenth Amendment Suffragette held a banner: *PERSIST!*



Civil Rights leaders, Flower Power, Grunge, Free the Nipple; take back the night. The trio wait for their turn and join the crowd. An orchestral drum sang among the crowd.

The sun broke the horizon. Shadows from the Tower shaded the grass of Highland Park. Mascara smothered Rose's eyes. She wiped her cheeks as she crossed the lawn.

Jumping down the boulders, Rose stepped into the street. She kips up the steps to her front porch & unlocks the door. Rose enters her house & locks the door behind her.

Rose collapses on her bed.

*Rest like the vamps.*

Dressed in denim cutoffs, high top converse, & a long sleeve baseball tee with a cut cleavage; Rose managed Alcott Co. When the door rang, Rose alphabetically sorted misplaced items.

Ding went the bell.

"Welcome in!" She greeted with her back turned.

Grant came through & waved a smile, "Hello Miss Briar."

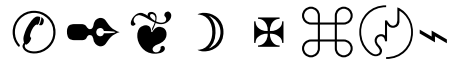
Rose whipped around without dropping the books. "Oh, hey you!"

"Sunshine looks beautiful on you."

"So does your pinup-muscles"

He chuckled and bowed his head. "Will you join me for dinner tonight?"

Grant's date loosened Rose's grip. The books crashed onto the floor. "At your house!?" Rose exalted with a knee to the ground. He met her on a squat, as they sorted the books.



“I was thinking of having a picnic on the water. Maybe a mix of Asian, Italian, & Spanish.”

His forehead graced hers. Their pupils locked a retraction.

“How about tonight?”

“After I close.”

“Promise?”

“Pinky Promise.”

She slid her finger into the crevice of his, crossed.

Waves crashed the yonder of the harbor walk integrating Southie & Dorchester. Fort Independence mounted the speck of green, known as ‘Castle Island’.

The blazing planet set upon the couples rendezvous. Scallion Pancakes laid on a bed of rice, while soy sauce dripped. Grant poured the basil ala vodka soup onto his pancakes. Rose took a bite with rice.

*Delicious.*

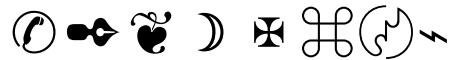
Sitting on top of the rainbow checkered blanket, a wicker basket rounded their feet. Silver wrapped gum remained open from a box of fresh Altoids.

Their bodies unwound on the grass. Their food was the only thing separating the new found friends. When not smiling at one another, they admired the dominant & notable ruin.

Grant wondered, “Have you ever been inside the castle?”

“A few years ago, security guards yelled at me & my girlfriends for trying to break in.” Rose mentioned.

“Woooooaaah! How?”



“We carried a painter’s ladder. We played it off like we were having a photo shoot. After snapping the pics. We placed the ladder against one of the walls. We tried scaling it. That’s when we heard barking orders to get down. Or police would escort us off the property.”

“Courageous.” Roared Grant.

Rose followed, “Have you?”

“Yeah, chugged a beer & ran chest first into the portcullis!”

“Portcullis?”

“The Gate.”

“Righteous! Do you want a piece of gum & mint?”

“Yes! Please & thank you.”

Rose handed Grant a drop & a slice. He held her hand while obtaining the mint slice with the opposite. A spark ignited. Rose and Jason locked vision with every jaw chew of the gum.

Mint particles exploded on their taste buds.

On the way home they walked the tracks from the JFK/UMASS Red Line stop. Coming from the beach, they kicked the police station ruin as a hollow vessel for incoming weather. Chalk & paint memorials dash the museums on the Fens. Her piercing galactic eyes stare a crash bolt through the rushing water. He dreamed of swimming with her in the ocean during the attack; regardless of the Græy Shark dying to eat them whole. *We named the boat Watson’s Jaw.*

*Pouring detergent into the muddy river.*



He was sixteen when she was seventeen. They protested a riot exploding in the building when the government disbanded the police force. Fire The Fire Army park electric engines: Harvard Health provides the canoed sails from time to time.

“We’ll go to the Cape.”

“Yeah, Sure.”

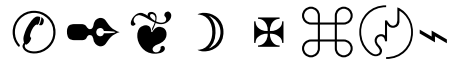
They whisked the lightning electric sunshine lavender; MBTA Commuter Rail Train. She & He squeezed their bodies through the plastic card & ticket, standing gate; scattered openings landed their splitting on the platforms; hopping through pits until they found the tunnel openings.

Rose & Grant chucked their way along the MBTA. When the tunnels entered the tacks, the friends kicked off and followed the random streets back home. Such a bizarre neighborhood to roam. Never common to stop through, yet maybe on a fever dream night, awakening from the sleep walking on a crisp autumn horizon of a dawn moon cresting the illuminating a notorious cove.

They cut through the abandoned neighborhoods divided by the toppled highways; climate protests advocated for electricity. This is the opposite side of the Parthenon. Capitalism abusing fossil fuels; enough of it.

*End curses, some say*

Hours upon hours went about. Rattled ACs turned on for an hour limit: open windows through the night. Climb up there without permission & you shall be slain.



They ran without touching their hands through the street. The three family classic retro floorplan crisp a reflective beam from the charred shingles. Their house is a haunted funhouse: beware for a scare. If you break into her house without permission, aware the consequences.

Tunnels lack theory considering the model structure of the landmark housing; in years time. Any connection to the Roslindale [(Hyde Park, Mattapan, Readville, Dedham)] Mirrored Vanity Colonial originated as hieroglyphics for the wolf crawls behind the walls; howling to the 02131-2 Harvard tunnel system beneath Weld Street, the attic & basement of 175, and the damaged forest where an emerald of Allandale Woods flicker.

Surviving trauma through radicalism as a fight for freedom & liberation is how this haunted arch survives.

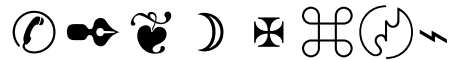
Rose asked Grant, "Would you like to come in?"

"If you need, yes: please!"

Rose reached for his strong veined grip of his palm & fingers. Their pulse slid together, pulsing a blood vein. She unlocked the door and led him inside.

WOAH.

She led him bound the contemporary modern chamber cuando tu illame para ella: Reina de Rojas como se dice Hearts... McNamara tapestry wallpaper, a beautiful glory beyond the strange, bizarre, perfect, & beautiful. Lewis Carrol's sick & twisted mind trap shattering her ceiling from an explosion in the basement. Or a plate crash beneath Suffolk & Norfolk Counties falling into earth.



Beware the two families connecting Colby & Montclair: she'll appear, trust me, barefoot on the pavement. The curse of 175 lingers in the basement. To escape her, his & their house: where is the secret passage in the basement? The wooden planks are the ridged octagonal serve of the basement curve. Further the laundry with a four by four glass frame door guarding the sloping driveway; yonder the frame is collapsed den with slit window: air hockey.

*Which door is accessible when called upon?*

Darting through the Beech Glen street third floor greeting entrance, the door stayed open for a bit. At the cusp of wooden oak landing, the screen door slammed metal plastic to the front porch.

"Can we open the front porch?"

"During the day. Back porch is open."

"The staircase." Grant anointed.

"Sir Hardy, I will guide you with an electric torch."

"We'll lock it tonight?"

"Of, course. Are you sleeping on the couch...Or?"

"Somewhere with a thick comforter."

"Can I hold you?"

"Yes."

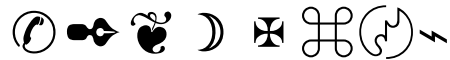
Fingers hook at the belt loops. Light bites kissing lips.

"Safe Word?"

"Door Knob."

Vanity mirrors heal the traumas of tabloid sexuality. Love thyself & set the others free. We hurt ourselves unaware in order for the chance of protecting somebody else.





Kissing along the channel hallway, connecting to the kitchen,  
wide open crevice beams for the living space. Flicker of gleamy  
shadows of the dust skylight opening to the crash in the attic roof.  
Plexi for the enjoyment of natural light.

Waists pull forward.

Moans.

Shirts pulled off.

Leading a continuous loop levitating.

Backs spread across the table.

Stumbling into the bedroom.

The moon stands above the dark galaxy, an aquamarine wave of  
purple rotating the planets. Craters hallow a dust crest of Saturn.  
Mars desires a crash. Jupiter floated about.

Oversized t-shirts & weed spark the bungalow bed, wedge in  
the ninety degree angle of the room. Sixteen inches of the minor  
grand mattress canvas the glow from the atmosphere.

He holds the Castle Island polaroid wedged as a crest for  
display.

She sits through the window on the back porch. From the  
wicker thrones, her climb became accessible, when need be.

*Every museum on the walk?*

They decided not to cross the opposite staircase, to avoid  
securing the locks of the mud mat navigating the attic ascension,  
descent, or forward porch. These spots become tense without  
supervision.



She crawls through as he nestles for her. Their ribs match swooping arms; slanting the window at a fingernail, hairline fracture of an ounce, open.

“Even if I lived this far up, I could not sleep with the window open.”

“Let me close it.”

“I feel safe with you. Breeze does feel nice.”

“I’ll open it higher. But if somebody appears, we’ll beware the hammer above the vacant heater.”

“Standing your box spring on the floor-folding blankets under limbs, secured from an evil force. What happened in yours?”

“Fevers came. Cold splash of water on my face. Headlights upon cold & chalked pavements.”

Briar & Rose dwelled a lucid dreamscape as the Maned Wolf approached their fort amid the floral field. The canine circles the slumber piles, waiting for a ladder; if necessary.

*Beware the wolf snap, please by their kneel, nervous for the bite.*

“Let me hold you tighter?”

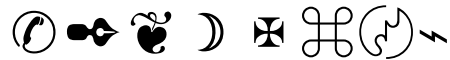
“Yes.”

Arms wrap tighter.

Oxygen transports carbon dioxide, a vine catches element:

*:Photosynthesis:*

Then came a thrice of a rain well wetting the granite & fresh clean cinder. Fog drifted over the coves. Græy clouds fill blot & fill



the sky. No light reflects from the immaculate glass structure, secured of: grass, boulders, granite; crested.

The courtyard divided from the garden cries: climb over the Berlin wall or tear it down. If he builds walls without windows & tables: shatter the ceiling!

Rose stood faraway from the grand concrete staircase, swooping into the aquatic risings; salt stains & fresh water rain pours of Dawn soap & detergent.

*Scrub Scrub Scrub*

Briar stepped over the chain links separating the terrace from the boulder foundation dipping into the ocean. Waves crash below her stance. She SCREAMS into oblivion.

Her frustration echoes.

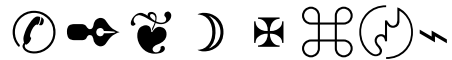
Ravens *flutter & flash* with their jet black wings.

The trio leapt on foot for the avenging rebuttal of a failed court hearing. Brooke, Jeanie & Rose dressed in dark for the occasion. What a horrid McMansion; no, out of the question.

Spray paints the stencil.

Detrimental are the stalking at a stumble into H&M. Pointed fingers and whispers. The silver sleeveless dress is a must, how durable the years, or a moment. An associate handed a thrifted clearance team; wrapped in a compostable brown paper bag.

Briar laid the donation within a public bookshelf near the Catholic Center of NorthEastern. Drop off vegan necessities when able.



She stumbled in as an older child, lost from her Godmother:  
The staff created a pact: once her Godmother almost broke down the  
front window display to find them.

“Nice to see you”

“You as well.”

“Particulars?:”

“Hounds tooth” Max Mara approved; over the humbled years.

Lands End Pop up: the Clarendon on Newbury St. Manor:

*Have you ever runaway the street: be so nonchalant; whatever:*

Rose donated the cloth to a Women’s Shelter in a public book  
shelf: somewhere along the back of the hill behind the gold chromed  
dome of Suffolk City Hall: Beacon.

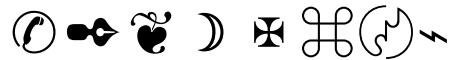
CLOSED read the front door sign of Alcott Co. Briar  
alphabetizes from the coffee table. A-M on the left, N-Z on the right.  
Piles stack by two. She counts the cash drawer. Capitalism sucks.  
Rose leaves fifty dollars in the drawer. A deposit slip fills around  
eight hundred dollars.

Rose shuts the overhead lights. Two remain: red exit sign, &  
glass cashier counter. With her fingers pressing the plush buttons,  
Briar Rose secures the alarm system.

Through the gold ruin lit aisles, they depart; locking the door.

Briar looks both ways & crosses the street.

Rose geared for her four mile stroll home. Before her hour &  
fifteen minute walk to her apartment; she decided to stalk the siren  
halls of Faneuil Hall.



She waited for them all to stumble out of the wretched clubs. Fresh air they praised at one sight of her cheek bones & hers & his & theirs.

“Well”

They bowed their heads as their repressed memories sauntered a marching jump around the granite blocks mounting seats for those on a hot day.

“Sully’s waiting by the way.”

Everybody held the scoffs, yet shadowed a grin from the remembrance. Wild times & no double dipping; however share thy food.

*OhThyWord.*

Some found the unlocked doors around Clinton Street & Chatham Street. Single travelers advocate the store front entrance, yet available by public walking. This phase passes on the weather.

*Witness thy features. Explore. Be Wild & Have Fun!*

Rose walked herself home. A woman named Rhonda accompanied her back. She cleaned the mess halls when the parties ended. Rhonda also inherited the enclosed halls.

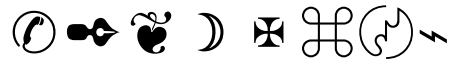
“Whatever”

“Hope you are well.”

“Different around here.”

“What type of change?”

“Odd, yet familiar.”



Rhonda survived insomnia. On some evenings she helped a double with her medical associates degree. When Rhonda stepped into the hospital office on the bursting crest of Back Bay & South End: Rose handed Rhonda a fifty dollar bill.

“More sirens lurk on the bridges.”

“Of course. Good evening.”

“Hydrate & call me.”

“Twist of the rolodex.”

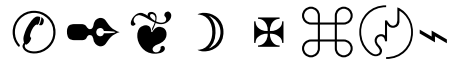
Fort Ave greeted Briar with the scraping of a Rampion Tower. Rose walked down the middle of the street. An eerie stillness drifted in the air. Not on cricket chirped. Further down the street they walked. Briar cut through the park,

Constellations rotated the sky. An atmosphere gone, yet healing. Feet stomp fast. The house appears before her. A translucent masked stalker, dressed in black, targets Briar. He stood yards away.

Without hesitation, Rose Briar runs for their life, daring not to look back. Rose jumps off the boulders. She planted her feet on the grass. She sprinted across the street without checking for traffic.

Briar smacks into the door, flicking the keys, piercing the wedges into the nod. The handle turns with a piercing slam, reverb from the mudroom atrium, up the wallpapered staircase.

Brail readings of the designs, guided Rose Briar ascending the octagonal atrium swoop of the wooden stairs. Rose catches her breath after double & triple stepping to the third floor landing.



Inside the Briar Apartment, Rose punched the landline off the wall. The hallway light reflected the space for dining services. The phone rang. Rose closed their eyes.

“Abigail, pick up! Please.”

After a ring, the receiver clicked to a breathing sound.

“Rose?” Agent Kennedy inquires.

Briar remains quiet.

“Rose? Are you there?”

Briar doubts herself & closes her eyes.

“Rose.”

“Agent Kennedy, I had an anxiety attack.”

“Are you safe?”

“Fine here.”

“I can arrive. Do you need Officer Finland to arrive before me?”

“Another night. Thank you for answering.”

Agent Kennedy & Briar spoke with one another until the morning broke. However, the glass shattered. Officer Finland arrived at the front door.

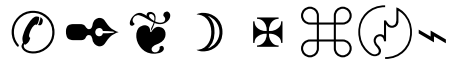
“Miss Briar, Officer Finland Here. Somebody broke into your store.

Red & blue lights flickered. Wearing sneakers, sweatpants, & a flannel; Rose burst through the caution tape of Quaker Lane.

“This is a closed crime scene!”

“I manage the shop!”

Glass shards shattered from the window.



In the neon flashes, Briar secured Grant & Kennedy in her vision. He stood with the fire department around their engine.

Officer Finland informed me, “your alarm system warned the station.”

“I see.” Rose noted.

“Do you have security cameras?”

Rose points above the entrance door.

In the office, Rose rewound the security footage on the cube television screen. She hated the static. Never turned the machine on, much. Footage caught the shadowed figure. Rose paused before he threw the brick.

“Ski mask”, Officer Finland mumbled.

“Could be anybody.” Rose whispered.

“Cronus is the lead suspect,” Agent Kennedy reminded.

A few nights later, hundreds of people lit candles as they lamented around the Liberty Mall in the Boston Commons:

*TAKE BACK THE NIGHT*

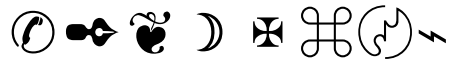
Advocates spoke through bullhorns among the kneeling.

“I would like to thank you all for appearing tonight. My health, love, & warmth radiates through you, this city, our state, the country, & Mother Earth.

*Flashbulbs Burst*

“Tonight I will read from a speech by Suzanne Stutman: *It is the loneliness of abuse which is part of what is so terrible. It isolates, it denigrates, it makes us feel that we are bad, and ugly and useless—and the*





*list goes on. In fact, those of us who have been so wounded have our own kind of beauty. We understand pain and invisibility and vulnerability and silence. We have often the passion and the compassion to take the pain away. This is our gift. For we are like the Phoenix rising from the ashes. We must make the day bright for those not as strong as we have become. We must march, we must protest, we must legislate, we must raise our voices into the darkness so that no children be allowed to fall, no victims surrender in silence and shame. In so doing, we take back the night”*

Around the Bandstand, advocates & protestors strolled the dimmed park. Lit candles illuminated the path forward. Footsteps echoed while voices lacked murmur.

Fire blazed from trash barrels. Older radicals burn pornographic magazines; the ones lacking sex positive columns, contraception, the rules of consent.

The women pull from the stacks. Flicking their wrists, the magazines dashed into the flames. Embers flickered in the wind. Rose stared into the blazing inferno. Their cheeks warm a blush.

In the Kitchen of her Beech Street Apartment, a tea kettle whistled on the stove. Rose turned off the stove. She poured hot water into a mug. Rose brought the tea to the kitchen table. Decked in workout gear, Rose sipped her drink & read the paper.

## **Another Abusive Man Found Dead**



Rose jogged to the West Roxbury Planet Fitness. Briar crunched their torso. Stretching out her back, she rotated the Russian Twists of her ab pack.

She wanted to sweat buckets. They sought redemption.

Jogging from Cedar Street crosswalk, Rose turned on Fort Ave. Briar ignored any car driving in their path. Her feet grinded the pavement. Rose sprinted forward. Her arms pumped. Sweat poured from her hairline, twisting a bun under a ball cap.

Her lobes reminded to smooth warm castor oil into her hair to prevent receding hairline.

*'ll Shave my fuc'in scalp*

Rose bent the Beech Glen Street corner. Her destination lingered forward. She ran faster. Rugged breathing prevented coughs. Saliva wet her teeth.

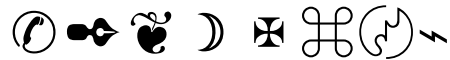
With a jump, Briar collapsed onto the three family fortress. Rose unlocked the door and went inside. Climbing the creaking steps as the murky light gleamed from the risen skylight, Rose Briar saw hell.

Wide open the front door.

Rose locked the door before she left.

Somebody broke into the apartment.

Briar reached their arm forward. Stepping into the apartment, They demanded: "Who's here!?! Leave now!" No answer came. They tip toed the hallway.



Rose stepped into the kitchen and terror struck her face. The chairs stood stacked on top of the dining table. Rose dialed the landline. Ring. The other line picked up.

“Somebody broke into the apartment.”

Officer Finland & Agent Kennedy brushed the furniture for fingerprints. Rose stood in the doorway, “I only lift the chairs when I clean the floor.”

“When did you clean the floors?”

“Last week.”

“Intruders tend to wear gloves. The prints might come back as yours.”

“There are other prints on the chairs.

“Miss Briar, do you have somewhere safe to stay tonight? Just so you feel safe.”

“This is my damn house!”

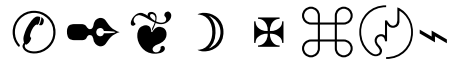
“As you wish. Please call if anything happens.”

Jason Grant climbed out of his electric Ford F-150. He carried a duffel bag & a purchased door knob, for replacing the lock. They hugged together for a while.

Darkness came to fill the sky. Lightning stroke. Rain poured.

Jason and Rose sat on opposite ends of the coffee table. Hasbro Perfection mounted their attention. The jigsaw pieces scatter the table. They turn the timer & press down the board.

As the timer ticks, Jason & Rose place the Jigsaw pieces into their spots. Tic Tic Tic. Their fingers pry for the pieces. Jason & Rose



bite their lips as they assemble the Jigsaw pieces to their spots.  
Almost There. Tic Tic Tic.

Explosion ruptures the plastic assembly.

Electricity dims with a shutter: out.

“Damn!”

“Can I hold your hand?”

Somewhere in the dark, Briar Grant held hands. They step out of the living room, back down the hall, & into the kitchen. Muddled window light guides their view.

“There are two flashlights on the fridge.”

“Found them.”

“May I have the other?”

“Yes.”

Lights orbed, Briar Grant came together.

“Thank you.”

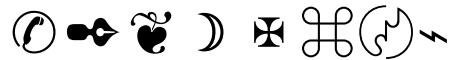
Rain splashed the windows & sidewalk. Droplets sogged the wood. Leaves cyclone the wind. Lightning crashed. In the bedroom, Rose slept with Jason. Water dripped. Wind howled.

Jason whispered in Rose’s ear, “Babe, I have to use the bathroom.”

Deep in sleep, Rose rested.

Jason kissed her head & grabbed a flashlight. The light guides him into the living space. He corners the hallway and enters the bath & restroom. Grant shut the door behind him. He placed the flashlight on the towel rack.

Rose cuddled the pillows.



Jason flushed the toilet with the lid closed. They washed their hands. With the light, Grant left the room. Stepping through the kitchen, the Ski Masked stalker whacked a pan across Grant's forehead.

Blood sprayed as Grant collapsed to the ground.

The Maned Wolf greeted Rose in her subconscious, by licking her hand. Rose woke up to the wolf. The canine nodded its head to follow. Rose climbed out of the bed and followed the fox through the field.

The wolf jumps onto a kitchen table mounting the tall grass. Rose admires the creature. The fox leads Rose to a spiral staircase constructed of stone. Rose descends with the animal. Further down they lead.

Descending the floorboards covered of sand, the Maned Wolf runs by a metal tin of soapy water. A scrubbing rack stands in the water. Garments pin to a clothes line & swing in the breeze; circling a shattered mirror.

Rose saunters to the reflective pieces.

Planets shone on the reflective glass.

Their eyes dilated in the reflection.

Briar steps on the shards.

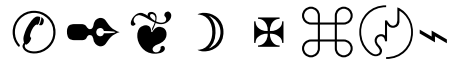


VI



THE CELLAR!  
THERE WAS THE END OF THIS TANGLED CLUE,

ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

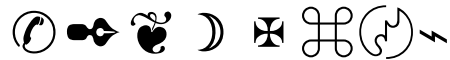


The cellar of the Beech Street fortress lacks the washer & dryer. Floor panels covered in dusty sand. Fallen streets signs linger as shields: stop, yield, walk, go. Empty door frames stumble from the lack of walls. Only four concrete with fine slit windows center the house.

There is room for improvement.

Rose awakens. Rain filters through a broken window. Shards of glass scatter the floor. Briar cautions themselves. *Oh, no.* With caution she sprints twirl light upon the ascension.





Landing at the opposite entrance, Rose bursts into the kitchen.  
“Jason!”

No answer. She slides a Strode Knife from the drawer. “Jason!  
Where are you?!” She sees a figure in the darkness.

“Rose, you look.”

“Where the fuck are you?!”

“You’re breaking my heart. Remember?”

“Shut the fuck up! Now!!!”

The stalker appears in the doorway. He dons the Ski Mask.  
Dressed all in black, he holds a hunting knife. “You would never  
blame me, if you did not love me.”

Rose screams and charges with the knife.

The Stalker defends with his blade.

CLASH CLANG

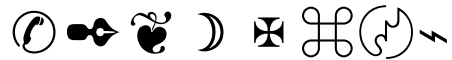
Rose gouges the stalker in the chest while the stalker stabs her  
in the stomach. She kicks him into the hallway, crashing on his back.  
Rose lunges over him.

He kicks her feet.

She stumbles with a wrestle to pin him down. Rose slices his  
face, long & hard. Slit & slice. Red flesh breaks from canvas. She  
jumps & runs. He grabs her leg. Briar falls, but kicks him in the face.

Rose opens the door. The Stalker jumps onto Rose. She tries  
everything not to fall down the stairs. Rose opens the front porch  
door.

Him & her tumble outside. He stabs her leg. She screams. Rose  
stabs his chest & pulls off the mask. Frank Cronus stares at her &  
spits out curdling blood.



“Why did you say those things?”

Rose bellows a scream & pushes Frank over the balcony.

Frank falls for a few moments.

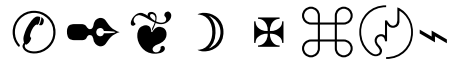
His head bashed the fire hydrant. Smack. Dead.

Rose catches her breath & looks over the balcony. Cronus bleeds out. His body laid still. She returns inside & hears Jason gasping for air. Rose opens the hallway closet. Grant falls out. Blood pours from his forehead. Briar checks his pulse.

Grant breathes.



VII



SHE CRUSHED HIS HEAD;  
SHE SHATTERED AND PIERCED HIS TEMPLE.  
BETWEEN HER FEET  
HE SANK, HE FELL, HE LAY STILL;  
BETWEEN HER FEET  
HE SANK, HE FELL;  
WHERE HE SANK,  
THERE HE FELL---DEAD.

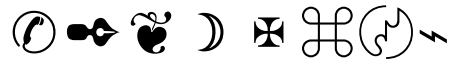
JUDGES 5:26-27



Over the balcony, Coroners zipped Frank's body bag, & rolled him into the ambulance. Bystander effect stood with citizens & reporters behind the yellow & black caution tape.

Agent Kennedy held Rose's hand through the stretcher into the Fire Engine with Jason. Officer Finland guards the front atrium staircase.

A News Anchor reports, "Breaking News. The body of Frank Cronus has been found dead at the bottom of fifty one Beech Glen Street in Roxbury. Sources clarify that self defense against him led to his final death."



Three days later, Rose stood before Yates in the courtroom of the Suffolk County court within the Probate & Family establishment.

*Somedays stoned on a summer autumn day with marijuana; walking the back of the hall, looking up reminds of Barbie; all those dreamhouse deteriorating in the gardens of the Earth.*

“We find Rose Briar not guilty,” announced Judge Yates among the courtroom. Relieving sighs hushed through the session. “Miss Briar, I solemnly apologize on the behalf of the Massachusetts Court System.

Rose nodded.

Marching down the immaculate yet damaged staircase, Journalists swarmed under the Rotunda. She walked through the Olympus light, bursting from the numerous skylights scattered among the ceilings.

Reporters question without sulking spit; as some wore face mascs, due to the virus.

“Wash your hands,” Rose announced behind her sunglasses. She pressed a Purell Sanitizer mounted in the cement structures.

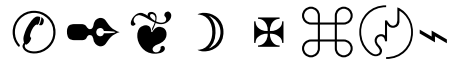
Camera bulbs flashed & flickered.

“What do you say to other survivors?”

Her mind rushed of agonizing thoughts: ‘Give it back to him!

*Flash* crisped the 16mms & digital devices. Everybody hiding plain sight, just behind the lens. Why all the male gaze? Most cleared the path & honored the personal space.

*‘Blessing in disguise’ said her Godmother.*



Jeanie locked up the *Cuisine* along the neo-lit & iron bridges connecting TD Garden, Bunker Hill Community College, & the crows of Harvard, Cambridge. She prepared food for the group. Grant & Finland stood by the windows with their hot chocolates.

Rose brought along Agent Kennedy, who murmured random & yet useful tactics during her college years; how else to beware the parties than by storming through the eclectic hidden yet apparent staircases, drawing rooms, & backyard blunders.

Brooke thanked Jeanie for opening.

"Anything for you all. Can I call you family."

"Close friends, Love you."

"Sure thing."

A reporter from Cosmopolitan recorded the psychiatric session between Dr. Collier & Miss Briar. The three of them sat in the glorious gardens connecting the inner to outer hallways of the Copley Square branch of the Boston public library.

Their materials scattered the black barbed iron table, with a circumference mantle. A scaled sculpting of Juno/Gloria rested in the towering floras & greens off the inner terrace without the claustrophobic ceiling. Bright blue skies created the atmospheres with brief & swaying rolls of the græy clouds.

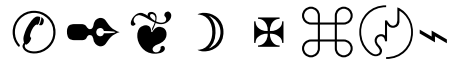
"How are you?" Dr. Collier asked.

"Fine, I guess." Rose reminded.

"Just fine?"

"How else am I supposed to feel?"

"You feel whatever emotions your brain processes."



“Even though I know he is dead, I still fear. Is it selfish to feel righteous about watching his ashes disperse from the coroner fire?” She watched from behind a window. She wore jet black sunglasses, oversized AC ⚡ DC baseball tee, short denim, & combats.

Dr. Grace Collier mentioned how time will help heal the trauma. Rose sighed. The reporter noted on their spiral mound of yellow lined paper. “I’ll forward the conversation over to Giles & Berger. Thank you for helping.”

“Thank you for listening.”



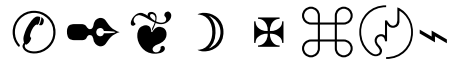


VIII



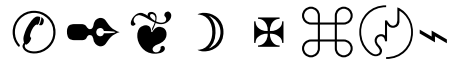
YOU ARE A WORTHY WOMAN

RUTH<sub>3:11</sub>



Long upon the cellulars appeared. Fear of missing out, screen depletion, & lobe cancer snapped a vinyl revival: landlines with caller identification. Men say where was her cell phone: turn it around: “stop tracking us.”

She heard about the lines outside of Apple for a holographic cellular. Lol, whatever.



Her house doors remained open, if anybody dared. Rose waited by the door & breathed. Grant climbed to the landing. He received his septum piercing.

“Silver chrome.”

Rose aimed for the back porch with the swaying of her shoulders. Agent Kennedy drank lukewarm tea, while standing on the terrace planks.

She planted roses in the basement. The slit window remained open, not even electric plastic filtered the hole. Water poured down the drain pipes on occasion. A weaved fence board crawled the cobbled walls.

Life & oxygen must dwell during the recovery of assault & horror.

Rose left all the doors open during the day. At night she locked the doors, however her crew had keys. Unstartled yet graceful remarks conversed if & when: Jeanie, Brooke, Kennedy, Collier, Grant, & Finland arrived at their open house.

Knuckles ramping a gentle push of the front door signaled a welcoming from home. Most times she answered face to face or echoed a holler from beyond the open space of the third floor walk up.

Rose Briar became safe in her own house & among the community.

Front doors open all day; a random all night walk. Dr. Collier prescribed RN's: who else: Jeanie, Brook, Grant, Finland, Kennedy.



Somewhere among the coves, Rose walked the red boots. Her  
combats followed her journey. Somewhere off the decks she ran full  
first. Swoosh became her dive into the Aquamarine; cloudy skies:

#græybow

She swam out further: maybe the southern cove or across?

Lighthouse afloat, in the shallows.

Warm towels

*Nice to see you*

Liberated Seas

;



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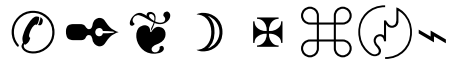
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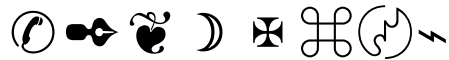
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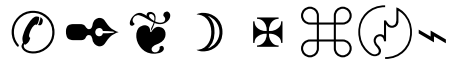
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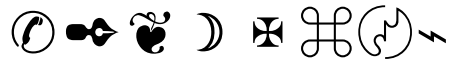
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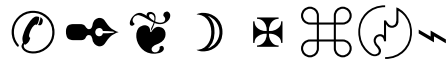
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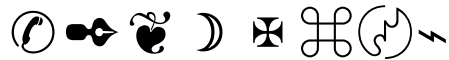
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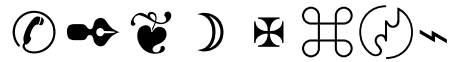
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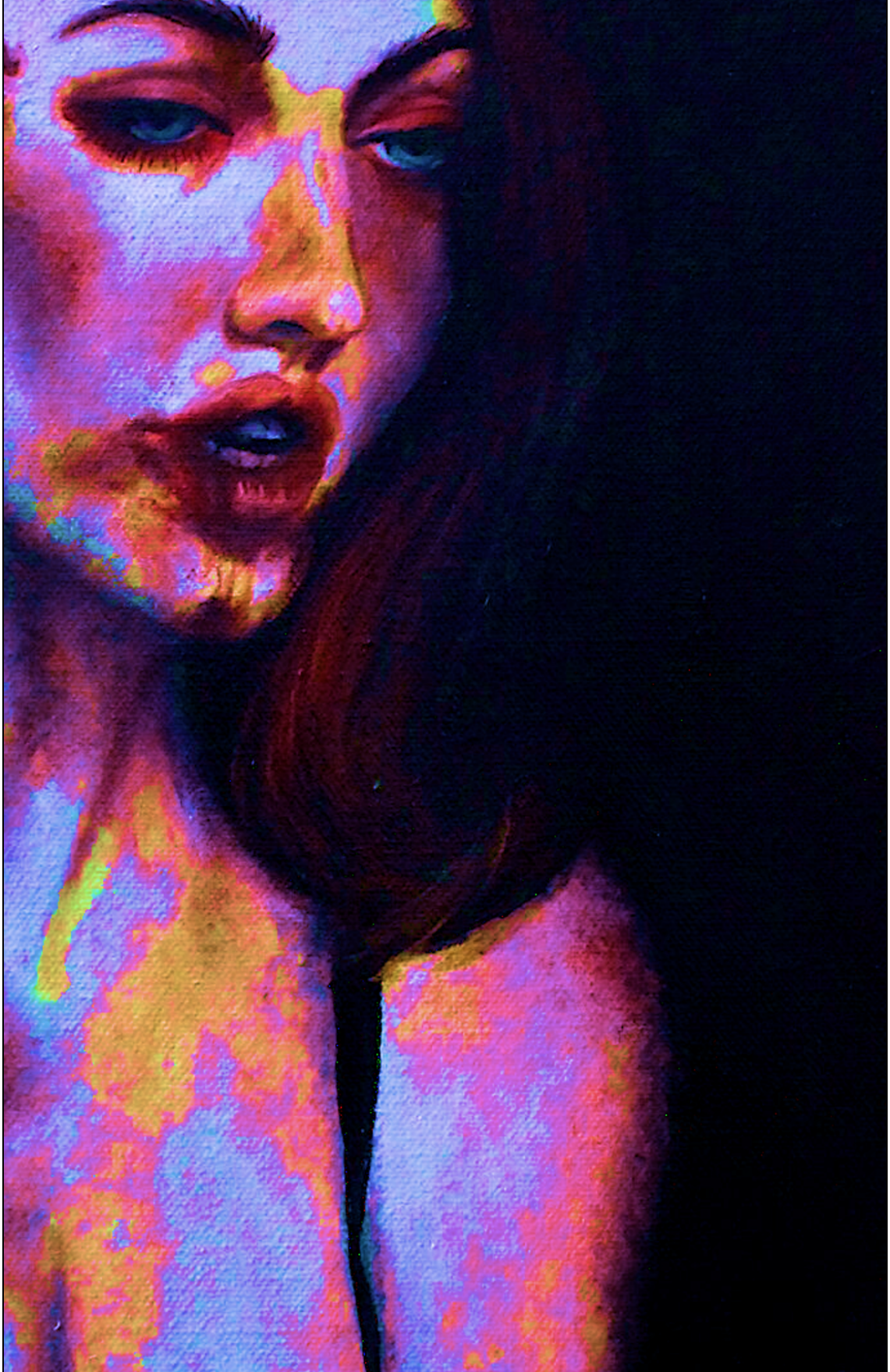
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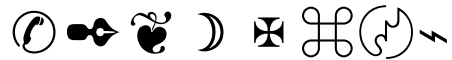
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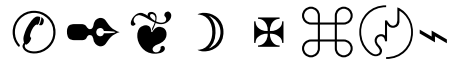
Story arcs dwell from AFROFUTURISM.  
Amanda Gorman cheers to you. Thank you.

Chanel Miller: thank you for writing;

Greta Thunberg,  
Thank you for teaching us how to sail rather than  
being locked behind red bricks.

Malala Yousafzai, the bastard who hurt you:  
[He is the reason we chant:, “No” -Rose Parks,  
1955.]

RUPI KAUR; you have us crying in the public  
fountains of the Copley Square archives; a  
lightning crest away from the grand marble stairs;  
on top of tables waving bandanas to: Rihanna,  
Halsey, Miley Cyrus



Here are the keys:

Hawthorne Gable

L.M. Montgomery Gable

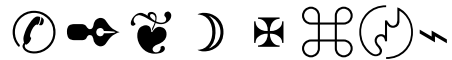
Charlotte Perkins Gilman

Austen Catalogue

Orchard House, Concord: L.M. ALCOTT

[BHÆR]

‘HAUNTED HOUSE’



I am sorry for forgetting your name,  
thank you for the original key:  
May we silver chrome it?

To PROFESSOR  
Fitchburg State University  
Massachusetts

Comtois-Lewis, Marquis, Saad, DeSouza, Tout,  
Getz, Saba, Kamau

Roussos, Takehana, Baker, DeMisty-Bellinger,  
Lawson, Giblin, Mc, A.G; Duffy, Keohane, Miss  
Stoddard, Miss Berg, Miss Kelly, Miss Price, Miss  
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Arienne

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©FLORENCE WELCH LANA MARINA FKATWIGS



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## OMMETAPHOBIA :

*Adjective & Noun*

**Fear of Eyes**

©MGM



# PROVIDERS



ALLISON [K] ©EOUGH  
Boston Latin School  
Varsity: Hockey & Softball  
2021



©EOUGH  
University of Massachusetts Lowell  
2022





MARY [K]©EOUGH

Paralegal

Massachusetts

Bachelor's Degree

University of Massachusetts Amherst

Magna Cum Laude

2019

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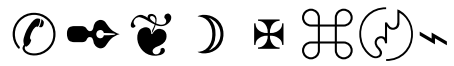
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*Ivy in the Garden: back, Boston, 1973*

© Nan Goldin

Boston MFA

Isabella Stewart Gardner





AMANDA WRIGHT PEREZ

Creator

Instagram @44Jobs



CORPORAL JAMES J. CAHILLANE

US Marine Corps

University of Massachusetts, Boston

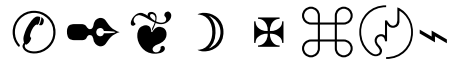
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PHARRAH TAI COUGIAS DEROMA STAZINSKI

Communicator

Massachusetts

Bachelor's Degree

Fitchburg State University

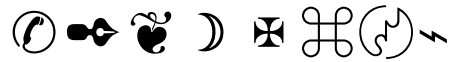
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# SHE WALKS THE RED BRICKS

*Surviving domestic assaults, a woman hunts*

010' 070' 130' 133.4' 158.1' 299.94' 305.405' 305.42' 320.58' 323' 345.74' 362.8292' 363.96'  
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